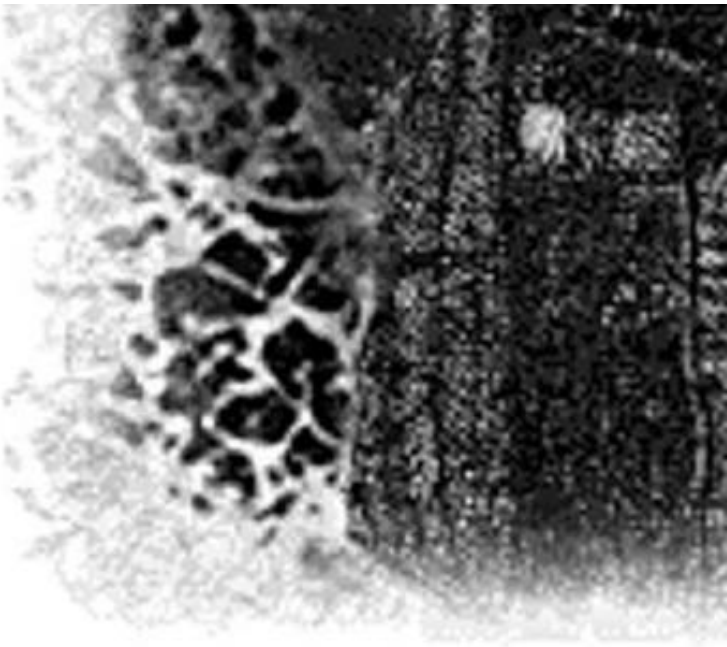
TSV
BOOKS



JO

1

2

DOCTOR WHO

REVELATION OF THE DALEKS

Based on the BBC television serial by Eric Saward JON PREDDLE

A TSV BOOK

published by

the New Zealand

Doctor Who Fan Club

1

A TSV Book

Published by the New Zealand Doctor Who Fan Club, 2007

New Zealand Doctor Who Fan Club

PO Box 7061, Wellesley Street,

Auckland 1141, New Zealand

www.doctorwho.org.nz

First published in 1992 by TSV Books

Second edition published 2000

Original script copyright © Eric Saward 1985

Novelisation copyright © Jon Preddle 2007

Doctor Who copyright © British Broadcasting Corporation 1985, 2007

Daleks created by Terry Nation

The BBC producer of Revelation of the Daleks was John Nathan-Turner, the director was Graeme Harper

The role of the Doctor was played by Colin Baker This is an unofficial and unauthorised fan publication. No profits have been derived from this book. No attempt has been made to supersede the copyrights held by the BBC or any other persons or organisations.

Reproduction of the text of this e-book for resale or distribution is prohibited.

Cover illustration by Alistair Hughes

Contents

1 Tranquil Repose

5

2 The Body Snatchers

13

3 Horror in the Catacombs

23

4 The Garden of Fond Memories

31

5 Come into My Parlour…

38

6 Death of a Chief Embalmer

46

7 Walking into a Trap

54

8 Judgement of the Daleks

61

3

Foreword

When Paul Scoones suggested that we republish Revelation of the Daleks eight years after its first edition, I knew I would have to read the book to see what - if any - changes needed to be made. I've never actually read the novel before, and I had to keep looking at the name on the cover to remind me who the author was!

For those expecting a masterpiece along the lines of Ben Aaronovitch's wondrous adap-tation of Remembrance of the Daleks - you're going to be disappointed. There are only two ways to write a Doctor Who novelisation - the proper way and the Terrance Dicks way.

There are no prizes for guessing whose style I have tried to imitate!

I've made some minor changes to the original text, just a few tweaks and adjustments here and there, plus a little cleaning up to clarify some points of continuity. The main addi-tion however is the inclusion of chapter titles. Apart from these alterations, what you hold here is essentially the same book as the 1992 version.

See you in another eight years for the third edition, perhaps?

Jon Preddle

February 2000

Revelation:

1. disclosing of knowledge to Man by divine or supernatural agency 2. striking disclosure revealing some fact

- Concise Oxford Dictionary (Seventh Edition)

Davros:

‘My mistake was making them totally ruthless. It restricted their ability to cope with creatures who relied not only on logic but instinct and intuition. That is a factor I wish to correct.’

The Doctor:

‘And compassion? Are they to be programmed for that?’

Davros:

‘If they will learn to recognise the strength that can be drawn from such an emotion.’

Resurrection of the Daleks

4

1

Tranquil Repose

The ancient Egyptians considered the pyramid to be the symbol of rebirth and resurrection.

Appropriately enough, Tranquil Repose was based on this concept. Its twin pyramids were a familiar landscape to those who lived on Necros, the seventh planet in the Pherra system.

Sufferers of incurable diseases came from far and wide to use Tranquil Repose’s unique services. The process was simple: one’s body was placed in a sealed casket and frozen.

Revival would be guaranteed once the cure to the ailment was found. But this luxury did not come cheap. Only those of great wealth and influence could afford the treatment. Despite this, Tranquil Repose still managed to draw in customers.

The Pherran colonies - established centuries ago in the early Thirtieth century - had obtained independence from Earth control. The Earth had been too busy fighting in the Dalek Wars and the people of Pherra did not want to get involved - the Daleks had not been seen in this sector of the galaxy for some time; they were at the outer frontiers concentrating their forces against the Movellans who had developed a virus that was killing Daleks in their thousands.

But the colonies were having problems of their own. Famine was of major concern to the planetary governments. Vast factories were working on overload trying to process enough food to feed the starving people but there was still never enough. Things began to take a turn for the worse. But then he came.

A supply freighter to Necros had dropped off a capsule that had been found adrift in space. Inside was a man. He was being kept alive, but only just, by a complex life-support system. In exchange for medical assistance and laboratory facilities, he promised the people of Tranquil Repose the use of his skills and knowledge to find a solution to the food shortage. His greatest discovery was the base ingredient for a protein extract, the formula for which he refused to reveal.

His achievements in this field, and in finding cures for many of the diseases, earned him the prestigious title of the Great Healer. The people of Necros were happy. The Great Healer had boosted the reputation of Tranquil Repose ten-fold. Its services were now in much greater demand. Bookings for the current season alone were greater than they had ever been! But the people of Tranquil Repose were hardly prepared for the day the Daleks came.

They emerged from the Great Healer’s laboratories in force. He announced that he was taking over the running of the complex. The Necrosians were powerless to resist his demands. But these Daleks were not the great threat they were expecting. Confined to the lower levels, they rarely ventured beyond the disused chambers beneath the complex. The Great Healer had instructed them to remain close to him.

Despite the presence of Daleks, it was business as usual at Tranquil Repose...

It was day-break on Necros. The burning yellow sun rose behind the twin peaks of Tran-5

quil Repose. Elongated shadows formed by the points of the towers crept across the snow-covered ground like a giant sundial.

Inside the complex there was a hive of activity. Attendants, identically clad in blue tunics, hurried about concerned only with their duties. Today was an important day for them.

The busiest section of Tranquil Repose was the main ceremonial Hall. It was here that arrangements were being made for a very important occasion. The Hall was located on Level One of the complex. Branching out from here, like the spokes of a large bicycle wheel, were the many service corridors leading to the freezing chambers, of which there were seven levels deep underground. The Hall was decorated with a number of narrow pedestal urns bearing purple flowers.

Towards the rear was a raised dais, upon which was a marble altar. On this lay the body of a woman. The body was dressed in a decorative golden robe, the face hidden beneath a golden mask. Around it was an arrangement of the purple flower. Two men were attending to the corpse; one was checking the flowers, the other dusting the death-mask.

Jobel made the finishing touches to the mask with a final stroke of his brush. 'Lovely, lovely, lovely,' he said with approval. 'Absolutely lovely.'

Jobel was the Chief Embalmer. Although he only held the second highest position at Tranquil Repose, Jobel liked to think he was in charge. A short dumpy man, his wide face was accentuated by a large walrus moustache. He was a vain man; his bald head was hidden by an ill-fitting toupee. He loved the ladies and also himself.

'You've excelled yourself, Mr Takis,' he added. 'You really have.'

Adjusting the pince-nez spectacles on his nose, Jobel smiled at his companion. Like Jobel, Takis was bald, but did not hide the fact. To make up for the lack of hair on his head, he had a full beard. Affixed to his lapel was one of the purple blooms. Takis was in charge of flowers at Tranquil Repose. Like many of the workers at Tranquil Repose, Takis also had a second duty; he was also one of the security officers.

'Thank you, Mr Jobel,' Takis replied. Takis took his work very seriously; his flair with flowers was widely acclaimed.

Jobel moved away from the body, and descended the steps into the main Hall. 'This will be the finest Perpetual Instatement that I have ever made,' he continued. 'Provided of course that the witch doesn't crumble to dust before we get her underground.'

'Not with you in charge, Mr Jobel,' said a squeaky voice behind him. He turned to see Tasambeker standing on the dais. She was a short, plump woman, not at all attractive. In fact, Jobel despised her. She was always following him around, always at his heels like an obedient dog.

'That was supposed to be a joke,' he explained.

'I'm sorry, Mr Jobel,' she mumbled.

Jobel turned to Takis. 'This one thinks with her knuckles,' he laughed.

He made his way across the Hall with Takis following behind. ‘Today will go down in funerary history, Takis. Everyone will want our services now.’

Takis could detect the pride in his boss’s voice. He cast his eyes back to the body behind him. This was Ronya, the late wife of President Vargos. Vargos was the President of Earth. Although Necros was no longer under Earth control, the President had wanted his wife to be interred here at Tranquil Repose. It was a great honour for them.

‘Let’s get today over with first, Mr Jobel,’ advised Takis.

‘Always the cautious one, Takis. But you’re absolutely right, of course.’

A man approached them from an adjoining corridor, and whispered something in Takis’s ear. This was Lilt, Takis’s assistant. Like Takis, Lilt had a beard, but he had a full head of blond hair. Takis asked to be excused.

6

Jobel nodded and turned to enter his preparation room and office, which was situated in a little annex off the Hall. His way, however, was blocked by Tasambeker, standing where she always did, at his heels.

‘What do you want?’ he bellowed. ‘You’re always under my feet.’

‘I’m sorry, Mr Jobel. I was told to inform you that surveillance has picked up the President’s space craft.’

‘Oh good. Let’s hope they’re on time. She’s starting to froth. And we know what that leads to. Thank goodness the casket is lead-lined.’

Jobel stepped into the centre of Hall and clapped his hands loudly. The Attendants who were milling about stopped to listen to his announcement.

‘I want to see you all in fresh tunics and full funerary makeup before the President arrives. We don’t want the poor thing uncertain who the corpse is, do we?’ He paused, waiting for the laughter he expected at his little joke. Disappointed at the response, he dismissed the workers and retreated into his office.

Tasambeker sighed heavily as the door closed behind him. She turned to see Takis, arms folded, looking at her.

‘What are you staring at?’ she demanded.

‘You’re wasting your time there. He’s not interested in you.’ Her infatuation with Jobel was widely known within the walls of Tranquil Repose. It was the subject of gossip in the staff rooms.

‘Get on with your work!’ she shouted, and ran into a corridor.

Takis laughed at her plodding figure, and left the Hall.

Apart from the body on the altar, the Hall was now empty. The double doors from the reception room slowly opened. A man dressed in an Attendant’s uniform entered, and looked cautiously about him. He could have easily passed as an Attendant, but the machine gun hanging from his shoulder was not part of the standard uniform. He also carried a small metal case. On a thin cord around his neck hung a silver flask. He was followed by an attractive brown-haired woman, also dressed as an Attendant, who carried a small laser pistol. She had a determined look on her face.

Having ascertained that the way was clear, Grigory beckoned Natasha on. They crossed the Hall to another set of doors at the opposite end. Cautiously he opened them. There was no one in the corridor. They continued on their way. Having got this far, there was no turning back now...

In a chamber beneath Tranquil Repose, a complex array of scanners and monitoring devices hummed with activity. A screen lit up showing the Pherran star-system. A green blip appeared, moving towards the centre of the screen. A squat white form watched, its eyestalk taking in the information flashing up in the screen. The creature raised its sucker-like arm and activated a control. On another scanner, the view of a wooded hillside appeared.

Something was slowly taking shape. The Dalek continued its observation of the hill as a blue box took form...

A white mist drifted slowly across the snow covered hill. The early morning silence was suddenly broken by a shrill grating sound that burst from nowhere. On top of the hill which overlooked a small lake, a tall blue box appeared. As suddenly as the sound had started, it ended as the box stabilised and settled on the knoll. A door opened, releasing a billowing cloud of steam as a small figure emerged.

Peri took a bite from the sweet roll she was holding as she stepped out from the warm interior of the TARDIS into the cold. She wore a thick blue jacket and black trousers, with 7

a matching blue beret on her head. It offered little protection against the sudden chill that hit her. She shivered and looked around her, blinking at the glare of the whiteness. ‘I don’t believe it,’ she mumbled. ‘What a dump.’

She noticed the lake and, trying hard to keep her balance in the slippery snow, she made her way down to its edge. She gazed into the black uninviting water. Lumps of ice floated on the surface.

‘With my luck I’ll probably fall in.’ The last thing she wanted was to get wet. She took another bite of the roll and screwed her face up in distaste. Tossing the remains into the water she watched as it bobbed on the surface.

The door of the TARDIS opened again, and the Doctor stepped out. The colourful clothes he wore during this incarnation were hidden by a heavy blue cloak that came down to his feet. He inhaled deeply at the chilly air, and exhaled with satisfaction. Spotting his companion down by the water, he spread his cloak out like a pair of giant wings.

‘How do I look?’ he asked.

She turned to him - and her eyes nearly popped out of her head at the sight of the giant

‘peacock’ standing by the TARDIS.

‘More comfortable than I feel,’ she complained. ‘This thing I’m wearing is too tight.’

She pulled at the constricting collar of her jacket.

‘You eat too much,’ declared the Doctor, making his way down the icy slope with little difficulty.

‘Hardly,’ she replied. ‘I’ve just given my lunch to the fish.’ She indicated the floating blob in the water.

The Doctor gazed around them. There was no sign of life in any direction.

‘Can’t I change into something more comfortable?’ she whined.

‘Certainly not!’ he snapped. ‘Blue is the official colour of mourning on Necros; and women’s legs are to be covered at all times.’

‘Sounds positively feudal.’

‘It’s polite - and not to say safer - to honour local customs. You should know that by now.’

‘But I don’t even know this guy we’ve come to see.’

The Doctor shot her a glance. ‘Guy?! Guy?!’ he bellowed. ‘You are talking about Professor Arthur Stengos. One of the finest agronomists in this galaxy.’

Peri looked at the ground. ‘I’m sorry,’ she whispered. ‘I’m even more sorry that he’s dead, but that doesn’t change the fact that I’m uncomfortable.’

Unnoticed by them, a yellow claw-like hand rose from the water and hovered over the floating remains of Peri’s food. The fingers closed around it, and the hand shot back beneath the surface, sending up a small splash.

Peri turned at the sound. ‘What was that?’

‘Do you want me to find out?’ the Doctor asked.

‘N-n-no,’ she stammered. She shivered again, this time from fear and not the cold -

which was turning her face bluer than her coat.

Suddenly the lake exploded - a great fountain of water splashing over the Doctor and Peri, soaking them both. They watched as the water continued to boil with great fury and eventually subside.

‘Poor old thing,’ the Doctor said. He turned to Peri accusingly. ‘I’ve warned you before about feeding animals.’

‘That was my lunch!’ she cried. If some aquatic life-form had died from consuming her snack, what could it have done to me, she wondered. ‘That’s the last time I eat one of your nut roast rolls!’

The Doctor glared at her. Didn’t she realise how long it had taken him to prepare that meal? With the food machine on the blink again, he had had to risk using the TARDIS

kitchens for the first time in hundreds of years. Disuse for that period of time was bound to make any device unsafe, as his near-accident with the gas stove had demonstrated.

Peri was however only concerned with her own safety. The wildlife of Necros had so far proven to be hostile. She had encountered many creatures in her travels with the Doctor, some of which had tried to make her their lunch. Just recently, she nearly ended up being fed to a savage creature called a Morlox on the planet Karfel.

‘What else is there?’ she asked nervously.

‘Oh, the odd Voltrox, the occasional Speelsnape,’ he replied. The names meant nothing to her, but whatever they were, she certainly didn’t want to meet them!

‘Do they bite?’

‘Only each other,’ he consoled her.

She closed her eyes and sighed in relief.

‘Come on,’ he announced, and strode back up the hill with great ease. He stopped at the summit. Peri was having difficulty gaining a foot hold, but with considerable effort she finally made it to the top. The Doctor didn’t wait for her and moved on.

‘You didn’t warn me about all this snow,’ she moaned - and promptly fell over. She called out for help, but the Doctor, oblivious to her predicament, was strolling with great gusto across the snowy ground, towards the woods that bordered the hill. Peri pulled herself to her feet and brushed the snow from her clothes. As the Doctor disappeared into the trees, she hastened her speed in order to catch up with him, trying her best not to fall over again.

Unseen by them, the waters of the lake heaved once more, and something leaped out onto the bank, the tattered remains of clothing clinging to the wet body. The thing scrambled up the hill and observed the receding figures. With a lumbering gait, the creature slowly moved off in the same direction.

In the scanner room beneath Tranquil Repose, the Dalek switched off the screen. Identifi-cation had been established. The female had called the male ‘Doctor’ and the blue box conformed to the description of the Doctor’s time craft. The Dalek moved away to make its report...

They had been walking for some time now and there was still no sign of civilisation. Peri was sure the Doctor had got them lost - and told him so.

‘Nonsense! I know perfectly well where we are,’ he declared.

But Peri was not convinced. The woods seemed to go on forever. She caught sight of a small bush growing amongst the trees, and rushed over to study its large purple flowers.

As a student of botany, Peri was interested in all floral species. Her travels with the Doctor had introduced her to many new, weird and wonderful blooms.

‘This seems to be the only plant that grows in this wilderness,’ she observed. The strange flower had a unique octagonal petal structure. She broke off a flower and smelled its fragrance. It was sweet like a rare perfume.

‘Herba baculum vitae,’ said the Doctor.

‘The Staff of Life,’ translated Peri.

The Doctor raised his eyebrows in astonishment at her perfect grasp of the Latin for the plant. ‘Its common name is the weed plant.’

‘It looks familiar.’

‘It’s similar in food value to the soya bean plant on Earth. I can’t understand why it has-9

n’t been cultivated.’

Peri broke off another flower and carefully placed it in her trouser pocket.

‘For your collection?’ he asked.

Peri nodded. She had filled her sleeping quarters on the TARDIS with the numerous plants and flowers that she had obtained during their travels. The Doctor wanted her to keep them in the TARDIS conservatory or the Cloister room, but she insisted on using her own rooms where she could keep a closer eye on them. Once, during one of his tantrums, the Doctor had threatened to throw them all out.

‘Yes. If I ever get back to Earth. I’ve got to impress them at college with something.

My grades certainly won’t.’

She thrust the first bloom under his nose. The Time Lord backed away in alarm. ‘It is safe to touch?’ she asked, scared by the Doctor’s reaction.

‘Usually,’ he replied. He turned away so she couldn’t see his mischievous smile.

Some time later, as they continued their way through the woods, there was a loud snap of a twig breaking somewhere behind them. The Doctor stopped.

‘A small rodent?’ he suggested.

Peri shivered. ‘With sharp teeth and rabid saliva...’

‘Not on Necros,’ the Doctor said. He saw the fear on her face. ‘Well, at least not rabies.’

Their path was now blocked by a large clump of twisted trees; the branches were bent and tangled like in a cat’s cradle. The Doctor pushed his way through the only gap he could find, protecting his face with his arm.

Suddenly there was a loud moan behind them. They turned to see a humanoid figure shambling towards them. Its face was covered in scales hanging off in patches as if it had melted. Its clothes were in shreds.

Peri screamed as it lunged forward. The Doctor pulled off his heavy cloak, and assumed a Venusian Aikido stance. The creature halted its advance and stood staring at the Time Lord, its eyes unblinking. An idea came to the Doctor, something he remembered from the planet Peladon. He pulled out his antique pocket watch and dangled it by its green chain in front of the creature’s eyes.

‘Peace to the world,’ the Doctor said in a quiet soothing voice. He swung the timepiece like a pendulum. The creature’s eyes followed the watch, its moans becoming softer.

‘Concentrate... concentrate... there we are,’ the Doctor said. ‘Now. What seems to be the problem?’

The creature growled and lunged with great speed for the Doctor's throat. Unprepared for the sudden attack, the Doctor lost his balance, enabling the monster to hurl him against a tree.

The Time Lord was stunned by the fierce blow, and gasped to regain his breath. The creature grabbed him by the hair and pulled hard. The Doctor cried out in pain, but despite the agony, he managed to twist around, and deliver a short, sharp blow to the creature's stomach with his elbow. It released its hold and staggered back.

Only temporarily winded, the thing lunged again, but this time the Doctor was ready for it. The creature rammed its head into the Doctor's chest. The Doctor fell back, absorbing the blow, and the momentum carried them both crashing to the cold snowy ground. They rolled down a step incline, coming to a rest at the bottom.

Taking advantage of this, the thing forced the Doctor onto his back. It then straddled his chest, pinning the Time Lord down, and once again went for the throat.

Peri slid down the slope after them. She looked around and spied a broken tree branch.

10

She picked it up, and with all her might, swung it in a wide arc, hitting the creature across its back. But it didn't release its strangle hold. The Doctor's face was turning red as his air was slowly forced from his lungs.

Peri lashed out once again. This time the branch connected with the base of the monster's neck. There was a loud snap of bones breaking and the creature froze, releasing its stranglehold. With a soft moan, it collapsed to the ground. Able to breathe once more, the Doctor rolled away, coughing.

In one of the trees, a small camera mounted on a swivel, was transmitting to Tranquil Repose. There were many such surveillance cameras all over the planet.

In a circular room beneath Tranquil Repose, a silent figure watched the Doctor's fight with keen interest. This was the DJ. His job was to watch all the events occurring on the planet, and broadcast them to those asleep in the cryogenic chambers. He wore a large set of ear-phones; a microphone at his lips. He squinted through dark-lensed glasses at the nine screens on the wall before him. He zoomed one of the screens to focus on Peri.

'Hey there, you guys,' he said, his voice slight with an American twang. 'For those of you who are appreciative of the humanoid female form, we have a maiden in distress.' He gazed at Peri's face with delight. 'It's not often that we get one of those around here. Usually this place is as quiet as a grave.' He cackled at his little joke.

‘But seriously though, guys - a word of warning: remember that although I am playing swinging Earth sounds of the 1960s, you are in suspended animation. And we don’t want a repeat of last time now, do we?’ He reflected back to three days ago when one of the cryogenic caskets popped open during one of his broadcasts. It took five Attendants to mop up the mess...

But the DJ was mistaken in his belief that all his listeners were asleep in suspended animation. In his laboratory deep within the catacombs sat the Great Healer.

The lab was in part of the unused catacombs beneath Tranquil Repose. This particular room was an old chapel. The chapel was accessible by two entrances, one leading to the service elevators that went to the upper levels, and the other went deeper into the catacombs. A white Dalek stood on guard at each entrance.

Paintings and ornate figurines rested within recesses in the walls. As if someone had deliberately disfigured them, the heads of all the statues had been broken off, and lay shattered at the foot of each statue. It was as if they had been decapitated to reflect the Great Healer’s own pitiful situation. In the centre of the room was a complex control panel. The console itself was part of an elaborate life-support system. To one side was a tall cylindri-cal dome, the top of which was connected to a group of computer consoles by a thick cable. Inside the dome was a head, the face lined with great age. The eye-lids were wired closed. The sightless eyes were assisted by the lens affixed to the forehead. Around the head was a complex array of sensors. Although the console was fixed the dome could freely rotate 360 degrees.

The wall opposite was dominated by a large video screen, the face of the DJ looming large from it. The Great Healer always listened to the DJ’s broadcasts, anxious to learn of any strange happenings out on the surface.

The scanner’s view changed to the exterior scene of a young woman and an older man, both dressed in blue, crouching in the snow. Strangers! thought the Great Healer. Assassins maybe? Or could this be the Doctor? The man did not look like the Doctor, but perhaps he had regenerated again?

The DJ’s droning voice echoed around the chamber.

11

‘Shut the fool up!’ the Great Healer ordered.

Obeying its master, one of the Daleks moved to a console and lowered the volume. The DJ continued his broadcast in comical silence.

The Dalek from the monitor room glided into the chamber.

‘Report,’ demanded the Great Healer.

The monitor Dalek raised its eyestalk to the scanner. ‘It-is-the-Doctor!’

‘Excellent! My lure has worked.’

‘Shall-I-order-Daleks-to-detain-him?’ enquired the monitor.

‘No. Give me the greater pleasure to watch his own curiosity deliver him into my hands.’ His scheme to bring the Doctor to Necros was so far going as planned. The Doctor would suffer for his past interference. The Great Healer - otherwise known as Davros -

was looking forward to the moment when the Doctor was brought before him. He ordered a guard to alert the engineers to commence work on the statue.

Shaking with maniacal laughter, Davros fixed his gaze back upon the face of his enemy. ‘Soon, Doctor, soon...’

12

2

The Body Snatchers

Natasha and Grigory had reached the seventh level of freezing units. Luck seemed to be on their side; they had managed to reach this far down into the complex without being seen.

Natasha consulted the map which detailed the route they needed to take to reach a certain unit. At the far end of the corridor was another double set of doors. There was a solitary guard in position outside it, the first human they had encountered so far.

Grigory watched as Natasha primed her laser pistol. ‘You’re such an impetuous child.

Those things kill.’

‘So do guards,’ she replied harshly.

‘Oh, how did I ever allow myself to be talked into this folly?’ To calm his nerves he removed the cork from the flask around his neck and took a swig of the contents. The sharp acidic taste of voxnix burned his throat.

‘That stuff won’t help you,’ she snapped with disapproval.

‘It can but try,’ he replied, and took another swallow. ‘I don’t know if my hands shake from fear - or from the delirium tremens.’

‘If you’re ready.’ She was just as scared as he was.

‘If you must,’ he said as he cocked the breech of his own gun in readiness.

‘One... two... three!’ she counted, then leaped into the corridor, firing a quick shot at the guard.

Grigory also fired off a short burst, scoring three direct hits. The guard didn’t have a chance. He took the laser full in the face and the bullets ripped into his chest, puncturing his lungs and penetrating his heart. He collapsed to the floor in a bloody heap.

The sound of gunfire on the floor above him triggered an alarm within Davros’s chamber.

‘Message-indicates-disturbance-on-level-seven,’ informed a Dalek.

‘Show me.’

The images of Natasha and Grigory appeared on the screen. ‘Inform Takis there are body-snatchers in the complex!’

‘At-once,’ the Dalek droned, and it glided out of the room.

Carefully stepping over the guard’s body, Grigory pushed open the doors and cautiously peered into the corridor. It was empty, but for how long?

Natasha consulted the map and saw that they had to take the next right hand passageway. There, they faced another set of doors. Sensing that they were close to their objective, the two ‘body-snatchers’ smiled in satisfaction.

Grigory put down the metal case he carried and took from it a thin wire. Next to the door was a keyboard with coloured buttons. He inserted the wire into the panel.

‘Hurry up,’ she said nervously. She looked back along the corridor, hoping that no one would see them. The dead guard would surely be found soon and the alarm sounded.

Grigory wiggled the wire. With a soft click, the doors opened. Smiling, Grigory closed the case, and they stepped through.

The Doctor had fully recovered from his ordeal with the creature. It now lay on its back, its head resting in the Doctor's lap. Peri, crouching at his side, held the poor creature's hand in hers.

'Why did you attack us?' the Doctor asked.

The creature indicated the Doctor's watch, hanging from his vest pocket.

'The disk... should not have tried to condition me,' it groaned. There was pain in its voice. 'I would have reacted similarly had you attacked me.'

The creature tried to sit up. 'In many ways I think you have done me a favour. It's not much fun being like I am. You wouldn't think that I once looked like you.'

'What happened?'

'The Great Healer...' The Doctor noticed the hatred for that name in its tone. 'I am a mutant - a product of his experimentation.'

'Who is this Great Healer?'

The effort to speak proved to be too much for the mutant. Its body convulsed in pain.

Peri had done more damage than she had intended, and now it was dying. With a final breath, the mutant stopped moving and lay still. Peri stood up, tears welling in her eyes.

'I killed him - and he forgave me.' She had never killed anything before. It was a horrible thing to have to experience.

The Doctor had seen death many times before, but the loss of life was still disturbing to him. He lowered the mutant's head onto the ground and stood beside his companion, and placed a comforting arm around her.

'Why did he have to be so nice about it?' she sobbed.

'You had no choice.' The Doctor picked up the stick that Peri had used on the mutant and started to scrape away at the ground. Peri watched in bewilderment, then realised what he was doing. She found another branch, and silently they dug a grave...

Davros - the Great Healer - sat silently brooding in his chamber waiting for news from Takis. A Dalek entered.

'Takis-does-not-respond,' it reported.

Davros growled in anger. The body-snatchers were getting closer.

'Get me Kara - and find Tasambeker! I want the intruders caught!'

‘I-obey.’ The Dalek left the chamber.

Davros had feared an assassination attempt on his life for some time now. The complex provided excellent security and protection, and his Dalek guards were obedient only to him. Although he had human agents all over the planet, it was only his Daleks that he could completely trust.

For ten or so years he had been at Tranquil Repose, using the complex to further his experimentation into breeding the ultimate Dalek. The Colony leaders wanted them all destroyed but Davros assured them that these Daleks were of no threat. Reluctantly the leaders agreed to let him continue. They needed him. They owed him a great deal.

But Davros feared that the leaders would still try to kill him. To this end, he placed human agents on every planet within the Pherra system. As a precaution, he transferred his laboratories to the old sub-catacombs. For further protection, he had his withered body sealed within a special shield. There he would be safe.

His fears had been justified. Two humans had managed to get to level seven. One more level down and they would be close to his laboratories - and himself. These ‘body-14

snatchers’ had to be stopped...

Natasha’s and Grigory’s progress was being monitored by the DJ (and watched with keen interest by Davros). The DJ was making his routine early morning newsflash. ‘Hey, you guys - we have you-know-what in the building. Body-snatchers! Looks like one of you will be in for a defrosting,’ he laughed.

‘But seriously. I think it’s time to cool the pace down a little.’ He switched off the droning sounds of Procol Harum’s Whiter Shade Of Pale. ‘You know, I think there’s nothing more soothing than a dedication or two.’ He reached into his pocket and pulled out a crumpled piece of paper.

‘You know, guys. I get as much a kick out of reading these as I know you do hearing them...’

Tasambeker had found Takis with Lilt. They had both been seen trying to sneak into the female Attendants’ dressing rooms. One of the juniors alerted Tasambeker and she was soon giving them both a good sounding off.

‘You both are in enough trouble as it is. There are body-snatchers in the building and they must have walked in right under your noses!’

Takis turned to Lilt. ‘You see anyone?’

Lilt shook his head. ‘No. Did you?’

‘No.’ Takis turned back to Tasambeker. ‘You see - they must have got in another way.’

‘Enjoy yourselves whilst you can,’ she sneered and walked away.

Takis and Lilt remained where they stood, and made faces behind her back. She stopped.

Takis’s grin fell from his face. Does this woman have eyes in the back of her head, he wondered.

Without turning around, Tasambeker bellowed an order. ‘Meanwhile - find the intruders!’

Davros switched off his monitor. Tasambeker had shown great control over those two lay-abouts. She had great promise. He could use her.

He swivelled around to face the human guard who had come to deliver the latest fiscal profit figures. ‘Bring that woman to me.’

The DJ decreased the volume of his transmitter. The final notes of Elvis Presley’s Hound Dog faded out.

‘Wow - Rock and Roll.’ He enjoyed dedication time!

‘Okay. Hello there casket 816, or should I say Hi, George. This is the DJ. Well, I have a very special dedication for you, my friend - from your dear wife Finella, who is still very much alive and would like to send you her fondest love.’ He placed a new cassette into the player unit.

‘Yes, she still misses you a heck of a lot. And she would also like to reassure you on this very special day, that her every waking moment is spent administering the research fund which you set up to find the cure for Beck’s Syndrome - that oh-so dreadful disease which took you from her side.’

He took a deep breath before continuing. ‘So George, from her heart to yours, celebrating your long life, here is some good old 1950s Earth-time Rock and Roll!’ He pressed the play button on his console, and the blaring sounds of Elvis Presley once more flooded the chamber:

15

One for the money,

Two for the show,

Three to get ready...

Exhausted, the DJ turned down the volume once more, and removed the cumbersome headphones.

‘You’ve got a wife-and-a-half there, George. She found a cure for Beck’s Syndrome forty years ago. Still, it’d be interesting to know what she’s really doing with all the money...’

Something on the scanner caught his eye, and he brought the picture to zoom in on the Doctor and Peri, who had by now reached the outer perimeters of the complex.

‘Hey there, guys. The maiden in distress is coming this way. I wonder which one of you lucky fellows she’s coming to see,’ he grinned.

There was no reply. ‘Well don’t you all answer at once,’ he joked. He revved the volume control up again...

Well you can do anything

But keep offa my blue suede shoes...

Although he always laughed at Tasambeker’s little tantrums, Takis took the matter of body-snatchers very seriously. Lilt had earlier brought to him news of the death of one of the lower level guards. The bodies of two Attendants had also been found near the rocket-landing bay, stripped of their uniforms.

Takis and Lilt took the elevator to level seven where the dead guard had been found. As they walked down the corridor, a white Dalek glided out of an adjacent passage and stopped them. They showed it their identity cards. The Dalek quickly processed the data and moved away without a word, satisfied that their credentials had been verified.

‘Was that thing on guard duty?’ frowned Takis. The Daleks usually kept to the catacombs to be close at hand to serve their master, the Great Healer.

‘So it seems,’ replied his assistant.

‘Then it’s worse than I thought. All that’s supposed to be in those cabinets are a few thousand stiffs in suspended animation. If the intruders were only body-snatchers, why is the Great Healer so concerned?’

‘You know too much, Takis...’ The Great Healer was worried. He had a secret within the cryogenic units that he did not want discovered - especially by a couple of body-snatchers.

There was too much to lose if they succeeded in opening one of the caskets. As much as he feared and distrusted the planet leaders, he also feared the Tranquil Repose personnel. Any one of them could be a spy, awaiting the ideal chance to kill him.

A Dalek glided in. ‘Kara-is-now-available.’

‘Then I shall speak to her.’

The Dalek activated the communications console. On the scanner appeared the face of an attractive middle-aged woman. Her eyes were heavily made up and her hair was hidden beneath a purple turban.

‘Ah, my dear Kara...’ purred Davros.

The cryogenic units were located on seven levels of the complex. A criss-cross of corridors covered these floors, their walls lined with a honeycomb of hexagonal panels. Each of these contained a casket holding the frozen body of the unfortunate victim of a deadly disease.

Natasha and Grigory entered corridor 712. Natasha consulted the map again. Casket 16

712Q was the one they wanted. She located the corresponding panel.

‘This is it,’ she pointed.

‘How did I ever let you talk me into this?’

‘Get on with it,’ she snapped nervously.

Grigory placed his case on the floor and took out a device the size of a pocket radio.

‘A bit of tomb-robbing is one thing, but did we have to kill that guard?’

‘Look. I don’t want to be here any more than you do. But that’s supposed to be my father in there.’ She nodded at the wall panel. ‘And I want to know why the courts were so unwilling to allow me to bring his body back. Now hurry up!’

Natasha was the daughter of professor Arthur Stengos, an agronomist, whose research into the manufacture of artificial plants to assist in alleviating the famines threatening his world and others alike, had brought him great acclaim and respect. Months earlier he had become stricken with a mysterious incurable disease. His death, he believed, would result in the deaths of millions of others. An anonymous sponsor contacted him soon after he learned he had only weeks to live. The mysterious benefactor agreed to pay for Stengos’s internment at Tranquil Repose. Arthur accepted the kind offer.

Natasha was suspicious of this sudden act of kindness from a complete stranger. After her father had been interred, she made application for the removal of her father's body through the courts but they declined. Natasha refused to give up without a fight.

She contacted a small group who were trying to petition the closure of Tranquil Repose on moral grounds. Through them she got in touch with others who had been just as unsuc-cessful in securing the return of loved ones. They believed that Tranquil Repose was a hoax. No one would ever be revived, the bodies just left to rot. The company stood to lose too much revenue if any of their clients came back to life. The annual fees to keep one interred were astronomical, meaning a very profitable business. To get proof, the group had to get someone on the inside. Natasha volunteered. She needed the skills of a surgeon to assist, so someone volunteered Grigory's services.

Aron Grigory had been a child prodigy. He entered medical school at the age of ten and was considered a genius by his professors. He had a bright future ahead of him. Then trag-edy struck. He had been out with a group of friends on a jet sled cruise when they hit a young child. Grigory had been driving. His friends kept quiet, but he still blamed himself.

He turned to alcohol for penitence. The next day his patient died whilst undergoing minor surgery. He was struck from the register for incompetence, and his life just fell apart.

He joined a couple of gangs to pass the time because he had nothing better to do. He learned various tricks which he believed would come in handy - lock-picking, minor electronic repair, lying and cheating. One day he fell in with the anti-Tranquil Repose people.

When they planned to break into the complex, he thought they were all mad, especially the fiery woman who kept ordering him about. He wanted to spend his free time drinking, not running around cemeteries. The last thing he wanted to do was to break into a coffin!

Grigory continued his work on the panel. The hatch was sealed with a magnetic lock which could only be activated from a switch in main control on Level One. The proof they needed lay just beyond that small panel. Would the body be there or would the casket be empty?

Natasha urged him to hurry up. She was certain that the dead guard would have been found by now. Time was quickly running out.

'You can't rush this sort of thing,' he said. He put the radio-like device against the control panel beside the cabinet.

'Neither can we hang around here!'

'If I open that door too soon, the molecular structure of the body will break down and 17

poor old Stengos will turn into a pool of high protein water. Even if I was confident that I could reconstitute him, we do not have a suitable vessel into which he could be ladled.'

His attitude was beginning to annoy her. 'Just get on with it!' she said angrily.

'Don't you ever listen?' He stood up. 'I'm a doctor - not a magician. You'll kill him, okay.'

'If we don't succeed, he's already dead. Now, get that door open!'

Through the thick purple smoke that belched from the four chimneys of the factory, the yellow sun looked blood red.

This was just one of many protein factories on Necros owned by Madame Kara Wardas that manufactured the food extract that was the staple diet of the Pherran colonies. This monopoly made Kara a very wealthy woman and she exploited this position to the fullest.

But she had not always been so influential.

The arrival of Davros ten years ago changed all that. The factories were originally used to refine water from snow. He demanded the conversion of the refineries to process the new protein which he had developed. Initially she opposed his demands, but once she realised the profitability of working with the Great Healer instead of against him, she welcomed him with open arms.

Her office was in the biggest of her factories, which was situated twenty kilometres south of Tranquil Repose. A great lover of art, Kara had decorated the office with statues and tapestries, a luxury only a few could afford. She sat at her wide desk. Her secretary, Vogel, stood behind her. He was a little man, his back slightly stooped (from bowing to her constantly). He had a small beard. Around his neck hung the medallion Kara had awarded him for services rendered.

Kara was in conference with Davros. He had interrupted an important business meeting, with demands to speak with her. His face leered at her from the video-screen.

'It's all very well to make these demands,' she was saying. 'But already you take most of the profits my factories make.'

'I created the product that you manufacture. I have a right to the money.'

'But, Great Healer. I am well aware of that. I would willingly sell the bones of Vogel here if it would help your cause.'

'And I would give them willingly,' squeaked Vogel, forcing a smile.

‘You see how devoted we are? But you’d get very little for him - dead or alive - and I would be without a secretary. And good secretaries are very hard to find.’

But Davros was not interested in all this nonsense. Kara seemed to be stalling.

‘I do not wish to hear any more from your prattling tongue!’ he exploded. Kara and Vogel were both shocked by this sudden outburst.

‘Forgive me,’ said Davros. ‘I want... I need more money. I cannot complete my research without it.’

‘We’ll do our best for you,’ assured Kara. ‘I am sure that Vogel can engage in a little creative accountancy on your behalf.’

‘I already do, madam,’ Vogel smiled. He took great pride in his work. ‘I am a past master at the double entry.’

‘Then you must make it a triple,’ said Kara. ‘You heard what Davros said. He needs more money.’

‘Do not call me by my real name on an open channel!’ screamed Davros.

‘I am sorry, Great Healer. Such is my enthusiasm for your cause, my tongue sometimes speaks what my mind would dare not think. Please accept my apologies.’

‘I would rather accept your money,’ Davros chuckled.

18

Kara laughed too, but it was more a sign of relief.

Davros terminated the connection. As his image faded from the screen, Kara’s smile vanished. The Great Healer - Davros - had given her the means with which she had obtained her wealth. But still she despised him for who he was, and for what he spent her precious money on. Something had to be done.

‘Has Orcini arrived?’ she asked Vogel.

‘Yes, madam.’

‘Then send him in...’

That ‘something’ was about to happen...

The usual hubbub of conversation quickly died as the corpse of the guard killed by Natasha and Grigory was brought into the main Hall. The white cloth covering the

body was stained with blood. Tasambeker lead the way and indicated to the bearers to leave the body outside Jobel's office.

The sudden silence had alerted Jobel, and he emerged from his office to see what the problem was. The Attendants started to whisper, the noise slowly building up to a loud buzz.

'If you wish to gossip, there is a rest room provided, you know,' he said to the crowd.

The Attendants went on with their business. Jobel noticed Tasambeker standing next to the corpse.

'I'm sorry, Mr Jobel,' she said.

'Oh, I'd have guessed you'd be here,' he snapped. Trouble seemed to follow her around.

'A guard has been murdered,' she explained.

'It's a pity it couldn't have been you.'

Tasambeker gave him an angry look. She hated the way he constantly teased and ridiculed her. But her love for him was too great.

Jobel saw she was hurt. 'Oh, I do wish you'd get used to my sense of humour.'

'I'm sorry, Mr Jobel.'

He pointed to the stretcher which had been unceremoniously left on the floor.

'Why are you taking him to my preparation room? That is not the mortuary.'

'He's been badly damaged,' she explained. 'He'll require cosmetic-embalming.'

'Don't you ever listen? I have the President's wife out there, and I can tell you that she's far more happy now than she ever was when she was alive.'

Jobel returned to his office and stood before his large wall-sized mirror. He studied his reflection with adoration and readjusted his toupee.

Tasambeker waddled in after him. 'I'm sorry, Mr Jobel.'

'I do wish you'd stop apologising,' he snapped. She was beginning to irritate him again.

'I'm sorry, Mr Jobel,' she said automatically.

He picked up a silver tray containing surgical instruments. 'I haven't got the time to deal with him.'

'Perhaps I could do it?' she asked expectantly.

‘I beg your pardon?’

‘I am a third year student and I’ve studied your methods very closely.’

‘I sometimes wonder too closely,’ he said under his breath. That would explain why she was always under his feet.

Jobel pushed his way passed Tasambeker and moved out into the corridor. He lifted the shroud covering the guard’s body and studied the corpse. The chest was riddled with bullet holes. ‘He certainly is a mess. I suppose you can’t make him look any worse.’ He had vi-19

sions of Tasambeker armed with a scalpel hacking into the body with relish.

‘Oh, thank you, Mr Jobel,’ she squealed in delight. A smile that could easily shatter a mirror broke out on her face. Now she could prove that she was not an incompetent.

‘Get him away from here!’ Jobel yelled. He had work to do. The President was due to arrive shortly and Jobel didn’t want stray corpses lying around in the corridors.

‘Certainly, Mr Jobel - and thank you.’ She took one end of the stretcher. An Attendant seized the other and they carried it into an adjoining room.

As Jobel turned to enter his office again, his eye caught sight of the surveillance camera affixed to the wall above him. He called out to Tasambeker: ‘Before you start hacking him around, the Great Healer wants to see you.’

He stared into the camera lens, knowing full well that the Great Healer would be watching. ‘Though I don’t know why I should be the messenger boy,’ he added.

Indeed the Great Healer was watching. ‘You are a fool, Jobel. I had offered you immortality, and though you prefer to play with the bodies of the dead - so you shall join them!’

Kara stood as Vogel brought the new arrivals into her office. The first man who came in had a look about him that made Kara gasp.

Everything about him was black; his jacket, his pants, his boots, his gloves, and even his expression. His long dark hair was tied in a pony-tail. A goatee beard grew at his chin.

He carried a wooden cane which had the head of a dragon on the silver-tipped handle. A single medal hung from his left breast pocket. Kara saw in his eyes the weariness of a man tired and exhausted. Being a Grand Master in the Grand Order of Oberon, he had faced death many times.

In contrast, the other arrival was a pig. He was dressed in a simple combat uniform. Because of his lowly status of squire, he did not wash or clean himself. His face was heavily scarred, his teeth chipped and yellowed. He had a week's growth of stubble on his puggish face.

'My dear Orcini,' greeted Kara. 'I would have met you on your arrival, but a small cri-sis in the process department diverted me. My sincerest apologies.' She lied. The small diversion had been her conversation with Davros.

'It is rare for someone in my profession to meet a client on their home territory,' the Grand Master smiled. His voice was clear and deep. 'Assassins, like debt collectors, are rarely welcomed. When we are allowed on the premises, it is usually through the side door.'

'He is a philosopher - how charming.'

Vogel agreed. 'I sensed it at once, madam.'

'I think we shall get on very well,' laughed Kara. She was eager to get down to business. There was a great deal to be discussed.

The dirty little man stepped forward and took her hand, pressing it to his lips. She flinched as she felt the roughness of his face against her soft, feminine skin.

'Bostock, my squire,' announced Orcini.

'M'Lady,' said Bostock.

'I'm afraid that the only philosophy practiced by Bostock, is to do as little about his personal hygiene as possible,' explained Orcini.

Kara felt herself gagging at the smell of the little squire. But not wanting to injure the relationship she hoped to build with Orcini, she forced a smile. 'And why not. The odour of nature has charms all of its own.'

'My sentiments exactly, m'lady,' grinned Bostock.

'He may smell like rotting fish,' Orcini admitted, 'but he's an excellent squire.'

'Indeed,' she said.

Vogel stepped forward and indicated the two chairs facing Kara's desk. 'Be seated, gentlemen.'

'We prefer to stand,' sniffed the Grand Master.

‘Ah, how foolish of me,’ Kara realised. ‘As men of action you must be like coiled springs, alert, ready to pounce.’

‘Nothing so romantic,’ laughed Orcini. ‘I have an artificial leg with a faulty hydraulic valve. When seated, the valve is inclined to jam.’

‘Perhaps you would like one our engineers to repair it for you,’ suggested Vogel.

‘I prefer the inconvenience. It’s a constant reminder of my mortality. It helps to keep my mind alert.’

Kara was impressed by Orcini’s honesty and integrity. She had definitely chosen the right man. ‘Oh, Vogel. We have a master craftsman here. I feel humble in his presence. No wonder your reputation is like a fanfare throughout the galaxy.’

Orcini’s tone became more serious. ‘I take little pride from my work. That I leave to Bostock.’

Kara saw that Bostock was grinning inanely at her. She felt her spine tingle.

Orcini continued: ‘I prefer the contemplative life - it isn’t always easy to find. So to cleanse my conscience, I give what fee I receive to charity.’

‘Such commitment,’ Kara whispered to Vogel. She turned back to Orcini. ‘You are indeed the man for our cause.’ She picked up a black box, about the size of a small book, and a small glass cube, containing a thick green gunge, from a nearby table. ‘As you know, our factories are dedicated to producing a high protein concentrate. This we sell to developing planets for such a ridiculously low price. It embarrasses and frustrates my account-ants!’

‘I am aware that this product has eliminated famine from the galaxy,’ said Orcini.

Bostock screwed up his nose. ‘Tastes horrible, though.’

Vogel gave the little squire a stern look. ‘That our scientists are working on to improve.’

‘Indeed,’ confirmed Kara. ‘As everything we do here, it’s to improve the quality of life for others.’

‘But if only we could get on with our work,’ said Vogel, his tone suddenly becoming serious.

Madame Kara’s voice also became colder. ‘As in every paradise, there is a snake,’ she explained. ‘A serpent.’

‘And our malignancy is a particularly vile one,’ added Vogel. As if on cue, Kara switched on the video screen. An image of Davros appeared. ‘He calls himself the Great Healer.’

‘I have heard of him,’ nodded Orcini. He had been all over the galaxy, but had never fully kept up with the latest news. He did manage to catch the odd piece of information, and knew of the wonderful things that the Great Healer had done for Tranquil Repose.

‘A pretentious type,’ pointed out Vogel. ‘And a decidedly evil man.’

Bostock stepped forward and peered at the face on the screen. ‘Not much of him,’ he noted, seeing the intricate life support system surrounding the body.

‘Nevertheless,’ said Kara, ‘he holds this planet in a grip of fear. He bleeds my factories dry with his constant demands for money.’

Orcini stared at the face on the screen. ‘The countenance is familiar.’

‘Then let me put a name to it.’ She paused for dramatic effect, then spat out the name

with utter hatred: ‘Davros!’

Orcini snapped his fingers. Davros! So, the Great Healer of Necros was none other than the evil genius whose creations had tried to invade the galaxy. Orcini had knowledge of Davros from his time with the Order. But like many he understood that Davros, who had been a prisoner of the Earth (a planet he himself had visited on several occasions as an assassin), had been killed about ten years ago. If Davros was still alive, Kara had good reason to despise him, and if his guess was correct, Kara had brought them to Necros to destroy this ‘snake’. Kara switched off the scanner.

‘He sits like a spider at the heart of this planet, using the money he extorts from us to rebuild his disgusting creatures.’

‘Creatures of hate,’ sneered Vogel. ‘Daleks!’

‘Fascinating,’ Orcini nodded, rubbing his chin with his gloved hand.

‘To kill Davros would be like...’ started Bostock, grinning as usual.

‘...the old days, Bostock,’ finished Orcini.

‘Destroy Davros - and your name will become a legend for all time!’ declared Kara.

‘You don’t know how long I have waited for a noble cause,’ Orcini said. ‘To once again kill for honour and glory.’

Kara’s face beamed. ‘Then you’ll do it?’

Orcini turned to Bostock. The squire nodded. Orcini looked back to Kara. A decision had been made.

‘Of course...’

22

3

Horror in the Catacombs

With a loud hiss of depressurisation, the panel of the casket holding the body of Arthur Stengos split open like metallic jaws. A cloud of icy steam billowed out into the eager faces of Natasha and Grigory. A couch-like shelf slid out. The moment of truth had come.

Grigory took a hand-scanner from his case and held it over the shrouded body. The scanner sounded a loud beep as it registered a humanoid form.

‘You’re wrong - the body is here.’

‘Unwrap it!’ she ordered.

Grigory placed the scanner in his pocket, and pulled down the zip on the shroud. ‘Why do I allow myself to get involved in such lunatic schemes?’ he asked, rhetorically.

He pulled open the flaps of the shroud. Instead of the familiar face of her father, Natasha saw the crude form of a mannequin ‘staring’ back.

‘You see! They have taken him!’ she said, excitedly. She had been correct all the time.

Tranquil Repose was a fraud.

The door at the end of the corridor burst open. Two guards advanced on them, weapons drawn. Behind them came two bearded men wearing Attendants uniforms.

‘Hold it!’ Takis commanded.

‘Run!’ shouted Natasha.

They dashed into an adjacent passageway.

Takis ordered the guards to fire but the targets had disappeared, and the shots ricocheted off the passage wall.

Natasha stopped running when she realised they weren’t being followed. She backtracked to the corner and looked around. The guards were moving slowly up the corridor.

Taking careful aim with her gun, she fired a continuous burst at the guards, dropping both to the floor.

Takis picked up one of the fallen men’s weapons, Lilt the other. Natasha ran off, with Grigory close at her heels. The corridor ended in a set of wooden doors. These were different to the ones they had encountered on the other levels. Without looking back, she flung the door open and they darted through...

Peri was tired. She was sure that this Tranquil Repose place didn’t exist. But the Doctor simply told her to stop complaining and to keep up with him.

Eventually they came to the first sign of civilisation - a stone wall. The Doctor dashed forward like an excited school boy, and Peri reluctantly followed. She had hoped she could convince him to return to the TARDIS and materialise the ship inside the complex, but the Doctor simply ignored her.

They followed the wall for whole two sides - but couldn’t find any sign of a door or entrance. It reminded Peri of a prison wall - with no way in or out. But the inmates at Tranquil Repose were hardly in a position to get out anyway, she realised.

23

‘This is ridiculous,’ said the Doctor angrily.

‘Still no door,’ cried Peri. ‘I told you we should have come by TARDIS.’

‘But there must be a door. No door - no letter-box; no letter-box - no mail.’

‘Your logic is impeccable,’ she agreed. They had walked all this way, and on finally finding the place, couldn’t get in! ‘For one thing,’ she pointed out, ‘most of the people in there are dead.’

‘Resting in suspended animation,’ he corrected her. ‘Not dead. There is a difference.’

‘Maybe, but there’s still no door.’

‘Oh, well,’ he sighed. ‘Only one thing left to do.’

Peri smiled. The Doctor was seeing reason after all. ‘Go back to the TARDIS!’

‘Certainly not. We go over the wall.’

‘You’re joking?’ She had spent all morning wandering across a cold wet planet, and now the Doctor wanted to go climbing over walls!

‘Well, how do you think I feel? I’m a 900 year old Time Lord. There’s not much dignity in scrambling over a wall like a small boy sneaking into an orchard on a scrumping spree!’

Peri could just imagine the Doctor as a youth running wild through an orchard eating fruit and being chased by an angry farmer. It might explain why he was so fat!

The Doctor stood with his back against the wall and cupped his hands to make a foot-hold. Peri realised that he was determined to get in, one way or another.

She placed her right foot into his hands and climbed up. The Doctor wobbled as he compensated for her weight.

‘I’ll be lucky...’ he said through clenched teeth, ‘...if I can lift you... with the amount...

you weigh...’

‘Oh, watch it, Porky!’ she snapped. He could hardly criticise, she thought. As she scrambled up onto his shoulders, her left foot slipped, striking him. With a final effort, she hauled herself onto the top of the wall.

‘Oh, no!’ came an anguished cry from the Doctor.

Peri looked down to see him massaging the place where she had hit him. Surely she hadn’t kicked him that hard? Then it dawned on her what she had done.

‘I-I-I’m sorry,’ she stammered.

‘It’s all right. Don’t worry.’ He took off his cloak and tossed it up to her. She caught it and placed it on the wall. He hauled himself up and glared at her with his lips pouted.

‘I wouldn’t have had it happen for the world,’ she said.

‘Forget it. I rarely use it.’ She handed him back his cloak, which he snatched from her hands.

‘But I know how fond of it you were.’

‘Just don’t go on about it. I shall have to live without it.’ He took out his beloved pocket-watch. Opening the lid, he dumped the broken inner mechanism onto the wall, then returned the now-empty case to his hip-pocket.

‘I shall find you a new one.’

‘On Necros?’ he bellowed. That watch had been given to him by Abraham Lincoln in the April of 1865 during one of the Doctor’s irregular visits to the United States. Abe told him that the play on at the Ford Theatre that evening was one not to be missed. He gave the Doctor the watch so he wouldn’t be late. The Doctor graciously accepted the time piece but knew that he would be unable to attend the show. There was one particular performance that night he did not want to see...

‘It wouldn’t have happened had we been able to find a door!’ Peri snapped, hoping to pass the blame onto him. The Doctor just glared at her again.

24

‘I’m sorry.’ She tried not to look into his eyes. She didn’t want him to see that she was about to cry.

‘So am I,’ he replied. He jumped off the wall and landed safely on his feet. He strode off, leaving Peri stranded. She cursed under her breath, lowered herself over the side of the wall and dropped. As she hit the wet grass, her feet shot out from under her and she crashed to the ground, landing on her behind.

This just isn’t my day, she sulked.

The passage they were in was not on her map. Natasha had no idea where they were. They had turned left at a T-junction and moved down this tunnel. It was lit with naked bulbs which implied that it was still in regular use. Although they had somehow managed to elude their pursuers, there was always the chance that someone could pass this way.

‘There’s no way out of here.’ Grigory pointed at the closed wooden door at the end.

‘That way must only lead further underground.’

‘You should have studied your maps more closely,’ scolded Natasha.

‘I stayed up all night studying them,’ he shouted. ‘The lack of alternative exits depresses me no end.’ Actually, he had spent all night in a drunken stupor. The prospect of this suicide mission put the fear of death into him.

‘Well if you’d studied it with a clearer mind, then you would have noticed that there are service lifts on every level.’ But she herself was not exactly certain that they would find a way out. There was no sign of a service lift down here.

‘Are there, now?’ he said sarcastically.

‘Come on.’ They backtracked the way they had come. Back at the T-junction, Natasha glanced at the map again in the hope that she would get some idea of where they were going. It was hopeless. Under her breath she ‘eenie meenie miny moe’d’ and selected the right-hand passage.

This one was much narrower than the main corridor. Inset into the walls were small statuettes and decorated pots. Grigory studied one of the pots, and realised it was a crema-torium urn containing the ashes of a long-dead colonist. They were in the old mausoleum.

I don’t believe in ghosts, he assured himself.

A noise came from up ahead. Had the guards found them? Gun at the ready, Natasha peered into the darkness. She could make out a squat white shape slowly moving closer.

She grabbed Grigory and pulled him into a shadowy recess in the wall. As the shape glided beneath a light, Natasha recognised what it was - a Dalek.

Natasha and Grigory both held their breath. Behind the Dalek were two guards carrying a stretcher. The body on it was covered by a cloth. Natasha noticed that the cloth was stained in blood where the head was. But then she realised that there was no head.

The silent procession passed by and disappeared into the darkness. Natasha breathed a sigh of relief and emerged from their place of hiding. She waved Grigory on with a flick of her gun. They continued along the passageway in the direction that the Dalek had come from but the passage only went on for a few more feet. There was a solid wooden door.

‘We could try another level,’ suggested Grigory.

‘There’s no time. I must contact the others.’ The members of their group would be excited by the news she had for them. Natasha took out a small transmitter and extended the aerial. As she leaned against the door it opened inwards.

An eerie red glow pulsed from the room beyond. The rhythmic throb of machinery could be heard. Cautiously, they entered. As they crossed the threshold, they failed to notice that they had broken an invisible beam. A camera mounted above the door activated and followed their movements...

25

(From his laboratory, Davros watched. ‘Inform Takis,’ he ordered. A Dalek glided out.) Computer consoles lined the walls. Pipes and tubes criss-crossed over head. Set

between four stone pillars that supported the ceiling was a large tank. It was from here that the red glow and the rhythmic pulse came.

Grigory peered into the tank. He nearly choked when he saw the contents of the tank, four brains floating in a chemical solution. ‘Reminds me of when I was at medical school.’

‘It’s gruesome.’ She felt a sudden chill. ‘Are they human brains?’

‘Yes,’ he gulped. Although he was a trained surgeon, the sight of these bodiless brains made him want to be sick. One of the brains twitched, and the heartbeat-like pulse flicker-ing in sympathy.

Natasha closed her eyes and turned away. She didn’t like this place at all. She put the gun she had been clenching on top of a nearby console and turned on the transmitter.

There was no response to her signal other than a burst of static. She repeated the call-sign but still there was no reply. Somehow the room was shielding the transmissions.

‘You don’t think that thing will work down here, do you?’ Grigory called from the other side of the room. A group of surgical tables near the tank had caught his attention.

One of the tables was soaked in blood. The body they had seen being carried had no doubt been operated on here.

‘I must make contact with the others,’ she informed. The evidence they had uncovered was enough to ensure the closure of Tranquil Repose.

‘We aren’t going to get out of here alive, are we?’

‘I don’t know,’ she replied. She was just as unsure.

Grigory swallowed hard. ‘I have this terrible fear that I would die begging for mercy.’

‘Pride isn’t important at the moment of death,’ she said. The transmitter was still silent.

Cursing, she switched it off and secured it onto her belt.

‘It is to me!’ he confessed. ‘They won’t torture us, will they?’

‘You’re becoming morbid.’ She wished he would stop talking about dying. They hadn’t been caught yet. ‘No one even knows we’re down here.’

‘Instant death doesn’t worry me,’ he continued, ignoring her. ‘It’s the long lingering kind that I’m worried about.’ He walked back to the tank and studied the brains. ‘You forget - I’m a doctor. When they slice me open, I’ll know the name and function of each organ as it flops out.’

‘At least you won’t die in ignorance then,’ she snapped. She was beginning to regret that she had brought him with her.

A white light flashed from behind a pillar. Grigory slowly stepped towards it. Behind the wide pillar was a low platform. The sight of the brains was bad enough, but he was not prepared for the sight of the thing on the platform. A shiver went up his spine and the hairs on the back of his neck stood on end.

On the dais was a Dalek. But this was like no other Dalek he had seen before. This one was completely transparent as if made from glass. But it wasn’t the Dalek casing that had made Grigory shiver; it was the thing that was inside it. ‘You’re right,’ he gulped. ‘This place is gruesome.’

Natasha joined him. Her mouth suddenly went dry as she looked upon the horror before them. Visible within the neck-section of the glass Dalek was a human head. Part of the right side of the face was missing, and in its place was a thin metallic membrane. The left side was whole but wires, and tubes containing coloured liquids, were imbedded in the flesh. The left eye, the only eye, was closed. The top of the skull had been removed, and 26

the brain exposed. Further wires and tubes ran into the throbbing mass.

‘It’s a complete head,’ Grigory breathed in awe. The body they had seen being carried out earlier was no doubt the remaining piece of the same person.

As they watched, the solitary eye sprang open. The blood-red pupil gazed back at them, unblinking. The lip-less mouth opened. Instead of teeth there were thin fang-like strips of metal. Natasha frowned. There was something oddly familiar about the face.

A strained voice croaked from the monstrosity. ‘Natasha?’

Grigory looked at his companion. ‘It knows you.’

Natasha’s jaw dropped. ‘It’s my father!’

‘Now listen guys. I don’t want to alarm you, but there’s something pretty weird going on down here.’ The DJ had been watching developments concerning the two intruders, and was bringing his listeners up to date.

‘As you know, we have snatchers in the complex. But it gets even creepier. The word is that the snatchers have been out-snatched! So if any of you guys remember, lock yourselves in your caskets and snap down those bolts. Other-wise you could find yourselves on the outside looking who-knows-where...’

Davros switched off the DJ’s channel. ‘Suddenly everyone sees and knows too much!’ he screamed. The female intruder had said that Stengos was her father. Her discovery

of his remains within the Dalek could jeopardise Davros's plans; not only had she discovered Tranquil Repose's terrible secret, she had also prematurely started part of the trap that had been set for the Doctor.

Davros reactivated the camera in the incubation room, and resumed his study of the two intruders...

Arthur Stengos was trying his best to fight the conditioning implanted into his brain. The sight of his daughter had brought only temporary relief. The new programming in his mind was much stronger and harder to resist.

Natasha and Grigory listened in horror at the terrifying story told to them by her father.

'My mind has been conditioned to serve a new master,' he explained.

'So you keep saying. But who is this person?' she pleaded. Her father had great difficulty speaking. His words were incoherent and slurred.

'I-I-I can't remember.'

'Why not?' she demanded. 'You remembered who I am!'

The voice was beginning to show strain. 'You are my daughter, Natasha. How could I forget that?' The single eye never blinked. It seemed to bore right into her. The eye drifted slowly and focused on Grigory.

'Who is this with you?'

'A friend,' she replied. 'Why have they done this to you?'

'I am to become a Dalek.'

Natasha felt her heart miss a beat. A Dalek? But how? What did this mean? Was this the terrible secret behind Tranquil Repose? She needed to know more.

'We are all to become Daleks,' he continued. 'We are to serve-a-new-order.' The voice began to lose its human characteristics and the mechanical tones of a Dalek broke through.

The poison within him was taking control. 'We-are-to-become-the-supreme-beings.'

The eye blinked for the first time. Stengos was fighting for control. Once more she heard the familiar sounds of her father's voice, pleading: 'Help me, Natasha!'

'What can I do?'

‘We must-multiply.’ Stengos was losing again. ‘The-seeds-of-the-Daleks-must-be-supreme. We-must-conquer-and-destroy-all-those-who-resist-the-power-of-the-Daleks!’

Arthur Stengos, professor of agronomy, was dying. The Dalek programming ate into his subconscious. There was only one way out.

‘Kill me, child!’

‘No! I can’t,’ cried Natasha.

‘It-is-your-duty-to-eradicate-all-those-who-wish-to-pollute-the-purity-of-the-Dalek-race.’ Stengos’s own voice returned. ‘If you love me child, kill me!’

Natasha froze with indecision. She loved her father, and to kill him would be murder.

But the thing inside the glass Dalek was no longer her father, and had to be destroyed.

‘Let me do it,’ offered Grigory.

‘NO!’ she screamed.

The Daleks had won. Stengos was dead. ‘It-is-my-destiny-that-the-Daleks-are-supreme-in-all-things.’

Natasha channelled all her fear and hatred, raised her weapon and fired. The casing cracked as the laser ripped into it. Liquid nutrients poured from the holes. The head gave a final terrifying yell as the life-blood gushed from it. The shell finally ruptured and collapsed. Electric cables and circuits shorted and there was an explosion from within. The head burst into flames and rolled away into a corner and melted.

‘I’ve got to get out of here!’ cried Natasha, holding her hand to her mouth to stop herself from retching. She ran to the door, and flung it open.

As they stepped outside, they found themselves surrounded. The two bearded men had found them, and had brought reinforcements.

‘Going somewhere?’ sneered Takis.

Lilt stepped forward and took Natasha’s gun. He viciously punched her in the stomach.

She dropped to her knees in pain.

‘Hey,’ protested Grigory, and received a similar blow from Lilt for his efforts.

Lilt grabbed Natasha’s hair and pulled her to her feet. He thrust a dagger under her nose.

‘Enough!’ shouted Takis.

‘But what about those that she’s killed?’ Lilt was disappointed. ‘I must mark her!’ He pushed the dagger hard against her cheek, drawing blood.

‘I said enough!’ Takis gestured to the guards. ‘Take them!’ The guards grabbed the prisoners and pulled them across the floor...

The Doctor and Peri had finally reached the main path to Tranquil Repose, much to Peri’s relief. Although they were still some distance away, the giant pyramids impressed her. She had always wanted to visit Egypt, and this was probably the closest she would get to the real thing.

‘Tranquil Repose!’ announced the Doctor, with a sweep of his hand.

‘Doesn’t sound very alien,’ Peri said, somewhat disappointed.

The Doctor glared at her. ‘Well, what did you expect?’

‘I don’t know,’ she shrugged. ‘Something a bit more mysterious.’ She looked at the buildings that rose before them. As well as the imposing pyramids, there was a scattering of smaller buildings. The pathway they were on was lined with impressive statues and sculptures. In fact, the whole thing looked very ordinary.

‘Humpf. Tranquil Repose,’ she mumbled. ‘It’s the sort of name we’d come up with in the States.’

The Doctor shook his head in disbelief. ‘America doesn’t have the monopoly in bad 28

taste, you know,’ he said, adjusting his blue and white polka-dotted tie.

‘I know that. It’s just the way you talked about your friend. I didn’t expect to find him in a place with such a tacky name.’

‘Yes, to be perfectly honest, neither did I.’ The Doctor stopped, deep in thought.

‘Arthur Stengos was not the type to artificially extend his life and to hang around in the vain hope that someone might come up with the cure for the organic breakdown of his body. No, it’s not like him at all.’

The Doctor’s mind wandered back to when he first met Arthur. The TARDIS had brought him, Jamie and Zoe to the planet Clion - one of the Pherran colonies. The colonists were on the verge of starvation. Arthur had been experimenting with extracting root fungus from dead trees as a food substitute. The Doctor had been very impressed with Arthur’s success and provided some help.

One night, the Doctor and Arthur sat down to a serious game of chess, accompanied by a large bottle of voxnix. Over the course of the game, they discussed a wide variety of top-ics such as nuclear physics, interstellar travel, the hunting of speelsnape and the potency of various beverages. Eventually the conversation became more

incomprehensible, with the breeding of Venusian shanghauls with perigosto-sticks, the delights of eating hangorn mudworms (especially when they don't stick to your teeth), and the viability of counting to one hundred while being swallowed by a voltrox being debated. When the Doctor, in all seriousness, confessed to Arthur that he was a time traveller, Arthur, who found the idea so ludicrous, laughed so much he fell off his chair! The following morning, Jamie and Zoe found Arthur, still lying where he had fallen, unconscious. As for the Doctor, there was no sign. They later found him perched in a fig tree, waving a trowel about and babbling something about being attacked by a marauding Krynoid...

When it came time for them to leave a few days later (once the Doctor had recovered!), Arthur presented the Doctor with his valuable Thesaurian chess set as a keep-sake.

For the Doctor, all that happened four regenerations ago, and he had all but forgotten about Arthur. It was soon after H. G. Wells had been safely returned to Scotland, following their adventure on the planet Karfel, that the Doctor found the chess set buried at the bottom of an old trunk that Peri had dragged out from one of the TARDIS's many empty rooms.

The Doctor suddenly decided he wanted to pay Arthur and his charming daughter Natasha a visit. Peri was somewhat annoyed because this meant the postponement (once again!) of their holiday on Andromeda Seven.

On arriving on Clion, the Doctor had been surprised to find the Stengos house empty.

He was even more surprised to learn of Arthur's mysterious ailment and sudden internment at Tranquil Repose. Without as much as a word, he had dragged Peri back to the TARDIS and set course for Necros. Peri was furious because he refused to confide in her.

This was the first time since they landed on this crummy planet that the Doctor had spoken at length about Arthur and his reasons for coming to Necros.

'Why didn't you tell me before?' asked Peri.

The Doctor snapped out of his day-dream.

'I knew there must have been a reason why we arrived in the middle of nowhere,' she sighed.

'Simply being cautious. Or would you rather I'd burdened you with what might have been a piece of paranoid speculation on my part?'

'But it wasn't.'

'We know that now. But when I first heard the news of Stengos's death, I couldn't be certain.'

29

‘Shouldn’t we go back to the TARDIS? I’d feel safer if we did.’

The Doctor stopped walking. ‘No! The TARDIS is bound to attract attention. I want to slip in unnoticed.’

Unfortunately the Doctor’s hopes for an unannounced arrival were not going according to plan. They had been noticed - and had been kept under surveillance ever since they landed.

Davros watched his scanners with glee, his body shaking with laughter. If only the Doctor knew that he was walking straight into a trap!

Ever since he came to Necros, Davros had had plans for the meddlesome Time Lord.

He familiarised himself with all the members of the scientific community in the Pherra system because he wanted to know the names of those who could be potential allies to his cause - as well as learn the identities of those who could prove to be a liability.

One scientist remained neutral - Professor Arthur Stengos. His paper on fungoid extrac-tions interested Davros, as it followed a similar principal to the protein extract that Davros himself had developed. Davros wanted to meet Stengos.

The little scientist proved a very talkative fellow. Davros listened with great attention to his story of a stranger who claimed to be a time-traveller. When Stengos confirmed that the stranger was called the Doctor, Davros knew he had the answer. Not only did Stengos’s neutrality make him ideal for genetic experimentation, he was also the perfect bait to lure the Doctor.

Davros arranged for Stengos to be infected with a special bacteria (one that had been useful during the war with the Thals on Skaro), and then made the mysterious offer to pay for Arthur’s internment at Tranquil Repose. News of Arthur’s death would soon spread.

Davros knew how the Doctor’s mind worked. Sure enough, the Time Lord had come to pay his final respects. Davros laughed. The day of reckoning was at hand...

30

The Garden of Fond Memories

Dressed in splendid blue tunics, their made-up faces painted with intricate blue patterns, the Attendants stood at attention in the main Hall receiving a final briefing from Jobel in preparation for the President's visit.

‘Now this is a big day at Tranquil Repose, and I don't want anything to go wrong.’ (Jobel’s reputation was on the line - and he knew it!) ‘The key word is respect,’ he continued. ‘To you, the President's wife is a stiff. But to him, she is a loved one who has passed on to pastures finer and lusher than those she knew in life.’ He marched up and down the Hall gazing at the Attendants as if he were an army sergeant inspecting the troops. The Attendants all stood to attention, not even daring to breathe in case they were given a harsh reprimand.

‘Now, although the President has yet to arrive, the utmost decorum is to be shown from this moment on. Black cotton gloves are to be worn at all times, and there will be no smoking, swearing, or drinking of herbal mixtures in the presence of the deceased.’

The body of the President's wife still lay in all her splendour, painted gold, covered with carefully arranged flowers, on the marble table on the dais behind Jobel.

‘Are you picking your nose?!’ he shouted at one Attendant whom he saw in the corner of his eye scratching his nostril. The Attendant dropped his hand to his side and vigorously shook his head. Two female Attendants giggled. Jobel shot them a warning glance and leered at the male Attendant. ‘I should hope not.’

He resumed his pep-talk: ‘All necessary conversation will be conducted in a whisper, and anyone who breaks these rules - inadvertently or deliberately - between now and the President's departure will find themselves scrubbing out the preparation room for the next month with a toothbrush!’ He stopped his pacing and faced the group. ‘Understood?’ The Attendants all nodded in agreement. Satisfied, Jobel dismissed them.

He sighed. It was going to be a difficult afternoon, he declared. He headed for the outer door. He just had to get some fresh air...

Meanwhile at her factory, Kara and Orcini were making last minute arrangements. Kara handed Orcini a bulky black box. He studied the device which had a series of coloured buttons on the front.

‘Nice, isn't it?’ she droned.

‘Incredibly compact,’ agreed Vogel.

‘Our engineers do such wonderful work,’ she continued.

Bostock leaned over to his master. ‘They're like a double-act!’ he whispered.

‘What does the box do?’ asked Orcini, his curiosity on edge.

‘It's a one-way transmitter,’ replied Kara.

Orcini raised an eyebrow. ‘That big?’ He had used similar devices before but they were usually compact enough to hide in one's pocket.

31

‘It is fitted with a built-in booster,’ explained Vogel. ‘Davros's laboratories are buried deep within the catacombs. Like the speelsnape, he buries his head beneath rocks and pre-tends that nothing can see him.’

Bostock took the box from Orcini's hand and studied the controls. ‘Will this help us find Davros - or are you wanting us to give you a running commentary as we go?’ he said sarcastically.

‘Even with Davros dead, he is not without his followers,’ pointed out Kara. ‘And like the disciples of any fanatic, they will not give up without a struggle.’

She pointed to the box. ‘As you can see, the device has a series of buttons. I will give you a simple five digit sequence which will activate the transmitter. That you must do the moment you enter Davros's laboratory. The moment you strike the final button, a pre-recorded signal will be transmitted to me and I will mobilise my forces to eliminate Davros's agents here and take over his entire base.’

‘No message - no rebellion,’ interjected Vogel, ‘and madam will remain safe.’

Orcini was sceptical. ‘And what if the transmitter is captured?’

‘If the transmitter is tampered with in any way,’ replied Vogel, ‘the message contained within the circuitry will simply melt away.’

‘Our engineers have thought of everything,’ smiled Kara with satisfaction.

Bostock felt uneasy. ‘I don't like it; too many safe-guards. It's as if we're expected to get caught.’

But it was Orcini who dismissed Bostock's apprehension. ‘He is a born pessimist,’ he sighed. ‘A doubter of other people's motives. As a rule, his instincts are infallible. The only time I didn't listen to him, I received this...’ He struck his artificial left leg with his cane. A dull metallic thud sounded.

Kara stood. ‘My dear Orcini. If we'd any doubts concerning yourself, do you really think we'd be having this conversation? Your reputation is legendary. It's said that you only have to breathe on a victim and he is dead.’

‘Oh, I never listen to the foolish things people say about me,’ laughed the Grand Master. ‘I'm fully aware of my own mortality -’ his smile faded, ‘- as you should be of yours.’

Kara could sense the hint of a threat. ‘Of course, of course,’ she said. ‘But you must appreciate that the safety features of the box are but a mere precaution. Nobody expects you to fail - I should have too much to lose if you did.’

Bostock could see the reasoning in her statement. ‘That makes sense,’ he said, nodding.

‘Yes - but understand one thing,’ Orcini said threateningly. ‘If at any time I smell treachery, the 'skill' I will use against Davros will be turned against you!’ To demonstrate that this was no idle threat, he held his hand palm upwards and snapped his fingers. A long thin blade flashed from out of his sleeve into his hand.

She pulled back from the deadly weapon. ‘Of c-c-course,’ she stammered.

‘Good,’ he said, and replaced the knife back inside his sleeve. ‘I'm not interested in your political ambitions. I undertake this mission for one reason only: the honour of killing Davros.’

‘We shall need maps showing his precise location,’ pointed out Bostock.

Vogel handed him a small leather satchel. ‘They are all prepared.’

‘And transport?’

‘Also arranged,’ replied the little secretary. ‘But for obvious reasons, it can only take you to the edge of Davros's camp.’

Bostock's face fell as he heard this. He did not like the idea of moving in on an enemy without proper cover. Besides which, he would have to carry all the equipment.

‘The walk will do us good,’ Orcini said. ‘You will not hear from us again - except as a 32

signal from this.’ He held up the transmitter.

‘Which we will await with eager anticipation,’ purred Kara.

The Grand Master clicked his heels together in salute and made for the door.

‘Orcini!’ Kara called. ‘I have not yet given you the coded sequence.’

‘Of course,’ he laughed, and he handed her back the transmitter.

Tasambeker was escorted into Davros's chamber by a Dalek. Having received Jobel's message that the Great Healer had requested an audience with her, she decided to change into her best uniform and funerary makeup first. She had never met the Great Healer before and wanted to make a good impression.

The Great Healer was always isolated from the general staff at Tranquil Repose. Only select employees such as Jobel and Takis had had the privilege of a meeting with the bril-liant scientist. This was the first time that she had even seen the Great Healer face to face, and the sight of the figure in the protective glass dome was something of a shock to her.

'You sent for me?' she said, her voice quivering. Davros turned to face her.

'Yes, child. I have been watching your progress these last few months and I am pleased with what I have seen.'

'Thank you, Great Healer.' There was fear in her voice.

'You have a good attitude for your work,' he continued. 'And you have a pleasing personality.' Tasambeker smiled. This was the first time anyone had paid her such a compliment. Such respect from the Great Healer was an honour indeed.

'Who is the head of your department?' he enquired.

'Mr Jobel.'

'Of course. I shall speak with him.' The Great Healer turned away from her. 'Tell him -

if you are agreeable, of course - that I shall like you transferred to my personal staff.'

'I shall be delighted - and honoured,' she smiled, causing her makeup to crack.

'Good. You will find the work very different from that you have been used to but I am sure you will find it rewarding.'

'Thank you.' Confidence was returning to her voice. The head of Tranquil Repose turned to face her again. His eyes, though sightless, bore right into her. She shivered.

'Please me and I can offer you the Universe!' The Great Healer turned away from her once more and fell silent. Tasambeker was unsure what to do. She decided that the Great Healer was finished with her, and turned to leave.

'Stay with me,' the Great Healer called out. 'Stay, and see what goes on down here. I will tell Jobel where you are.'

'Thank you,' she squeaked. She always wondered what the Great Healer did to be so great. And she was about to find out...

Not only did the catacombs beneath Tranquil Repose serve as Davros's laboratories, they also made excellent prison-cells. Natasha and Grigory were shackled by their wrists to the walls in one of the cells. For the last half hour they had been interrogated by Takis and Lilt. But their captors refused to listen to their story. As with any interrogation, the interro-gators wanted the prisoners to say what they wanted to hear, regardless of whether it was the truth or not.

‘Why do you keep going on and on about body snatching? He was my father!’

screamed Natasha. Her face was bruised and cut. Dried blood marked her lips and cheeks.

Takis and Lilt were more interested in their reasons, and not their excuses. ‘Why didn't you apply legally for his body?’ asked Takis.

‘Do you think I didn't try!’ she burst. ‘The law is against you. It's impossible to get a body back from here!’

‘So you decided to steal it,’ sneered Lilt.

Takis was becoming bored with hearing the same things over and over again. ‘Let's not go over that again.’

Grigory raised his aching head. ‘Agreed,’ he croaked, his voice weak from the beating he had received. His fear of dying in agony was becoming a horrible reality for him. ‘It is all rather a waste of time.’

‘Shut your face!’ bellowed Lilt, grabbing Grigory by the chin and slamming his head against the wall of the cell.

But Takis was beginning to feel that the two prisoners were telling the truth; they didn't know anything. ‘I've had enough of this. Tell them.’

Grigory nodded. Despite all the beatings, it was all becoming perfectly clear to him.

‘There's no need to. It's suddenly become obvious. You can't get a body back from here because those who make the laws don't want you to.’

‘He's right,’ said Lilt, a little surprised. ‘For a drunk, he's not so stupid.’

But Natasha was still in the dark. ‘I don't understand.’

Takis took up the story. ‘There isn't room for all the bodies. The idea of this place just doesn't work. The galaxy can barely support the people alive now.’

‘And not only that,’ cut in Lilt, ‘there are a lot of people - important people - in here.

Just imagine what would happen if they all went home. They'd be in direct competition with those now holding power.’

Grigory nodded in understanding. ‘Those who presently make the law.’

‘But that isn't fair!’ screamed Natasha. It was all too horrible to comprehend.

‘Neither is the fact that you'll still be hanged for body-snatching,’ pointed out Lilt. ‘It is a capital offence on Necros.’

Grigory was astonished. ‘But when there isn't even a body? Attempting to steal a mannequin can hardly carry a death penalty.’

Lilt smiled at Takis. ‘This one has finally woken up.’

‘But there will be a body,’ continued Takis.

‘But in how many pieces?’ Grigory realised that they were as good as dead. Their trial -

if it even got as far as a trial - would be a farce. They would simply become an example to others not to try and steal from Tranquil Repose. ‘You know as well as I do that the only part of Stengos that exists is his head!’

Takis frowned. What was this idiot babbling about?

‘The remains that you produce for the court will have to be manufactured,’ continued Grigory.

‘That will be difficult to prove,’ pointed out Takis.

Grigory thought for a moment. ‘That is assuming there will be a trial.’

‘The due process of the law will be seen to be done,’ said Takis.

‘Oh, yeah? I'm delighted,’ Grigory said sarcastically. ‘Though I am somewhat amazed to hear it.’

Lilt was beginning to get edgy. He pulled Takis to one side. ‘We must maintain our credibility,’ he whispered. Takis nodded in agreement.

He turned back to the prisoners. ‘Enough! What we want to know are the names of your accomplices.’

Grigory was fed up. ‘Oh, really!’

Lilt grabbed him by the hair again and pushed him against the wall, hard. ‘You were saying?’

‘Don't tell them!’ shouted Natasha.

‘Soften him up a bit, Lilt,’ said Takis. ‘I'm going for a walk. Let me know when he de-34

cides to talk.’ With that, he left the cell.

Lilt grinned, and leered at Grigory. Without Takis's supervision, he could now do what he liked to the prisoners. He seized the silver flask hanging around Grigory's neck, opened it and sniffed at the contents. He recognised the harsh vapours of voxnix. He once more grabbed Grigory by the hair, and forced his head backwards. Lilt then poured the entire contents of the flask down Grigory's throat. The surgeon coughed and spluttered as the burning liquid flowed into him.

‘No! You'll kill him,’ pleaded Natasha. But Lilt ignored her.

Takis was deep in thought. He had a lot to think about. He also needed some fresh air; the dampness of the cells made him feel ill.

He thought over the events of the last few hours. Firstly there were the deaths of two Attendants and the guard. The culprits had been apprehended but their story of missing bodies made him worried. Secondly, the fact there were Daleks on patrol in the upper levels meant that the Great Healer was feeling threatened. It was after all the Great Healer who informed him and Lilt about the 'body-snatchers' in the first place. What - or who -

did the Great Healer have to fear? In these moods, the Great Healer was unpredictable. He had shown that he was not a force to be reckoned with.

Takis reflected back to the time before the Great Healer had come. Tranquil Repose had been doing rather well for itself despite business falling somewhat. And then he arrived.

Everyone bowed to his every command. In no time at all he had taken over the running of the complex while remaining hidden away in his laboratory and never leaving its protection. It was a few years later that the Daleks appeared. His personal body guards, the Great Healer had called them. But Takis knew precisely what the Daleks were. His family had been killed during an unprovoked Dalek attack on a cruise-liner travelling between Earth and Draconia.

Takis was aware that there were other Daleks searching for their creator; he had been with the Great Healer when surveillance picked up a passing ship which the Great Healer feared may have been the Supreme Dalek's cruiser. Takis had never seen the Great Healer so frightened before.

Frightened? Takis pondered on this last thought for a while. Fear seemed to be the only weapon that could be used against the Great Healer. He made a decision, one

that he knew he could regret. But there was really no alternative. He headed for the communications room.

At a distance, the pyramids of Tranquil Repose had been impressive. But close up, they were even more so, thought Peri.

They had now reached the main entrance - a ramp which lead underground. Peri stopped and gazed at the huge complex in wonder. The Doctor, well ahead of her, was striding purposefully down the brightly lit ramp-way. Peri quickened her pace to catch up to him. A movement in the corner of her eye made her stop and turn. She caught a glimpse of something white behind them, moving between the statues that bordered the path.

‘Doctor!’ she shouted.

The Time Lord appeared at her side. ‘What is it?’

‘I don't know. Some kind of machinery.’

The Doctor looked around, but he couldn't see anything. ‘Well, whatever it was it's gone.’

Peri looked across to where there was a group of tall monuments arranged around a long narrow pond running perpendicular to the pathway. The Doctor was right, she 35

thought, there's nothing there now, but...

The monument at the head of the pond caught her eye. There was something strangely familiar about it. ‘Then I suggest you take a look over there,’ she pointed.

At first he didn't see what it was she was pointing at, but when he did, his face broke out into a worried frown. ‘I don't believe it!’ he shouted. Without another word, he dashed towards the statue...

The DJ was watching the Doctor and Peri. He noticed the look of concern on the Doctor's face. ‘Hey, guys,’ he drawled. ‘What's going on here? This guy looks like the walking dead.’ He raised his eyebrows. ‘Hey, which one of you guys is out of your casket?’

The Doctor looked up at the monolith. The sightless eyes of the face carved from the marble seemed to peer down at him. It was a face he knew very well. Its noble brow, the cat-like eyes. He had studied this face on many occasions in the mirror on board the TARDIS.

The face was his own.

‘No, no, no!’ he cried.

‘Well, don't you like it?’ asked Peri. ‘It's not a bad likeness.’

‘This is dreadful!’ he exclaimed.

‘Is it?’ she said, misunderstanding him. She thought the sculptor had captured the Doctor's features perfectly.

‘This place,’ he said, indicating the pond and field of statues, ‘is the Garden of Fond Memories. I've somehow managed to arrive after my own death.’

Peri frowned. ‘But that's not possible.’

‘With the TARDIS it is. This statue is of me as I am now. I shall never again regenerate.’

‘It must be a joke. Someone's having you on,’ she suggested.

‘No, no,’ he dismissed. ‘I've arrived in the future - and I'm dead!’

She shook her head in disbelief. ‘But it can't be.’

He turned to her. ‘Look at it this way,’ he explained. ‘If I were to take you to Earth after you had died, it would be possible for you to see your own gravestone.’

She now realised the seriousness of the situation. At some near point in his own personal future, the Doctor would return to Necros, but in the planet's recent past. He would die, and be buried here in the Garden of Fond Memories.

‘It's a gag,’ she offered.

‘Gag?! Gag?!’ he burst. ‘Do you realise how much a thing like this would cost? Far too much for someone to play fun and games.’ Once again he looked at the frozen image of his face. ‘And I thought I was good for a few more regenerations.’

The Doctor had already regenerated five times, and had a further seven regenerations before his body burnt itself out. But the statue's presence meant that he would die in this current form. The cause of death must have been extreme if it meant that regeneration had not been possible. This was his favourite of the six forms that he had worn so far, but even the Doctor wouldn't be that vain to choose death in preference to giving up his favourite body..?

Peri was familiar with the Doctor's ability to regenerate. In fact, she had even witnessed the miraculous metamorphosis. A while back, the Doctor had been infected with spectrox whilst on the planet Androzani Minor. He collapsed in the TARDIS and changed before her eyes. She had once been very attracted to the young fair-haired Time Lord whom she first met on Lanzarote, but the new version, she felt, was less appealing.

She had even met a much earlier incarnation of the Doctor. The other Doctor had been 36

taken prisoner by aliens known as Sontarans and her Doctor went to his rescue. She liked the little man, and still found it hard to accept that he would become the person that she now travelled with.

She looked up at the lifeless face, immortalised in stone. ‘If you're going to die, then what's going to happen to me? I can't fly the TARDIS.’ Then it struck her. ‘Unless there's a statue of me somewhere?’

She walked away, the thoughts weighing heavily on her mind. The Doctor returns to this planet and dies, but do I die also? ...but I'm too young to die... maybe I'm still alive, and alone on this planet... will I meet myself here..?

The Doctor hadn't notice that she had left his side. ‘I never thought the precogniscence of my own death would be so disturbing,’ he mused.

Peri's search for her grave was thankfully proving fruitless. She was now at the opposite end of the pond. She looked back to see the Doctor still standing before his own gravestone. The still, white features sent a cold shiver down her spine.

Then she blinked. Had the statue moved? No, surely not. Probably just the reflection of the sun in the pond. But as she looked again, she could see that the tall stone was moving...

it was tipping over - and the Doctor was standing right in its path!

‘Doctor! Look out - the statue!’ she shouted.

Her cries brought the Time Lord back to reality. He looked up to see his stone twin looming over him like an angel of death. He held up his hands to protect himself, but it was too late.

With a loud crash, the stone doppelganger claimed its victim…

37

5

Come Into My Parlour...

Peri’s lungs stung from the cold air as she ran over to the fallen statue. She saw the corner of the Doctor’s cloak protruding from beneath the rubble. The material was

splashed with a wet purple stain; red blood mingling with the blue cloth. A pale hand protruded from beneath the broken monument. Peri turned away from the grisly sight, her eyes wet with tears. The Doctor had died, just as he had predicted. She was now alone, and stranded on this planet.

Peri heard the sound of movement. She looked expectantly at the fallen statue, but it remained still.

A figure had appeared from behind one of the other statues. He wore an apron over his blue tunic, and wire spectacles on his nose. She noticed that his toupee was crooked.

'Please help me!' she begged the stranger.

'Calm down, calm down, my pretty,' Jobel said soothingly. 'Someone as pretty as you shouldn't be all in a fluster.'

'But you must help me. My friend has had a terrible accident.'

'Well that's obvious,' he said, studying the remains of the monument. He frowned with puzzlement because he did not recall there being a statue at the head of the pond.

'Well can't you help me get him out?' She couldn't understand why the man was not offering his assistance.

'I'd break my back lifting that,' he stated. 'And besides, you wouldn't want to see the mess under there.'

'He might still be alive,' she said hopefully. But she knew that she was only kidding herself. No one, not even the Doctor, could have survived.

'No, no, no. He's had it,' Jobel said with certainty. He gazed into Peri's wet eyes.

'Where as you, my pretty, are very much with us,' he smiled. 'I like pretty things - and you are very pretty, aren't you?'

His hand reached out and brushed a tear from her cheek. She flinched at his cold, clammy touch.

'Get your hands off me, you creep!' she cried.

'Oh, it's sad to see that you're upset. Was he a close friend?'

Peri looked at the Doctor's hand, which seemed to be reaching out for her. Although they constantly argued there had been deep respect between them. They had travelled to many strange places and seen many strange things, from one danger to another - only to have it end like this.

'Yes,' she confessed.

Jobel sighed. 'Life's strange, isn't it? You lose one friend, only to find another.'

Peri pulled away in shock as his hand touched her breast. ‘Are you some kind of weirdo?’

The man stood firm, his stomach pulled in tight. ‘I am Jobel. I’m very important here.
I 38

am the Chief Embalmer.’

‘Chief Embalmer!’ bellowed a voice that was very familiar to Peri.

The larger pieces of the fallen statue suddenly shifted as the Doctor pushed them away.

On closer inspection, Peri could see that the statue had not been made from stone at all, but a lightweight plastic material. The Doctor brushed the dust from his clothes and beamed at her. ‘I am not dead yet.’

‘Are you all right?’ said Peri as she gave him a big hug.

The Doctor, clearly embarrassed by this act of affection, smiled. He nodded at Jobel. ‘Is he touting for business?’

‘Me? Tout!’ snapped Jobel. ‘I’ll have you know that people come from all over the galaxy for my services.’ He studied the Doctor’s figure. ‘Mind you,’ he pondered, ‘you’re the first live client that I’ve tackled.’

‘He does go on, doesn’t he?’ the Doctor whispered to Peri.

Peri pointed to the dried patches on the Doctor’s cloak. ‘You’re covered in blood!’

‘Well it’s not mine,’ he reassured her. ‘Like the statue, and this...’ he nodded at Jobel,

‘...er... grotesque, it’s all part of an elaborate theatrical effect.’

Peri smiled with great relief. If the statue had been a gag after all, it meant that the Doctor wasn’t going to die here and, more importantly for her, neither was she.

‘Come on - we’ve got work to do,’ the Doctor said.

‘Where are we going?’

‘To find out who had that statue erected.’ He turned to Jobel. ‘Sorry I can’t say it’s been a pleasure to meet you.’

‘Humpf,’ growled Jobel. ‘You know - if the statue had been made of stone I’d doubt that it would have killed you.’

The Doctor raised his eyebrows. ‘Really?’

‘No. It would take a mountain to crush an ego as big as yours!’

The Doctor shrugged his shoulders. He had no further desire to talk to this man, and ended the conversation by walking off.

‘Goodbye, my pretty,’ called out Jobel as he gazed longingly after Peri’s departing figure. ‘Such perfection,’ he said, smacking his lips in delight.

As the Doctor and Peri moved out of scanner range, Davros switched off the monitor. ‘It is all as planned,’ he cackled. As anticipated the statue had aroused the Doctor’s curiosity which, as the saying went, killed the cat. And this particular cat was one that Davros was going to enjoy seeing killed.

He turned to Tasambeker. ‘I think you should attend to the Doctor.’

Tasambeker gulped, hard.

It had been half an hour since Lilt forced Grigory to consume the entire contents of the flask. The surgeon now hung limply from his chains, babbling nonsensically. Natasha watched, a dazed expression on her blood-wet face.

‘Why won’t he talk?’ Lilt demanded.

‘I didn’t make him drunk!’ Natasha exploded.

Lilt delivered her a hefty punch to the stomach. She coughed up more blood. Lilt returned his attention to Grigory. ‘Talk..!’

Grigory just moaned…

39

WELCOME TO TRANQUIL REPOSE

ALL VISITORS PLEASE

REPORT TO RECEPTION

The Doctor looked up at the notice suspended overhead and grunted. He had no time for such formalities. He had business to attend to. He pushed open the large doors beneath the sign and stepped into the main parlour Hall. He removed his blue cloak and draped it over a nearby chair.

Peri took off her own cumbersome jacket and tossed it onto another chair. It was a relief to be free of the constricting garment. She pulled her maroon blouse into shape and looked around the room. She noticed it had been decorated with the same purple flower they had seen in the woods.

The Doctor made a quick scan of the room, taking in every detail including the surveillance cameras mounted on the walls. There was no one about. The place was as quiet as a grave, thought Peri.

'It's creepy,' she said, stating her anxiety.

'And it'll get a good deal more creepier when I find out who erected that statue,' came the reply. The Doctor had noticed the golden body resting on the raised dais, and ascended the steps. He studied the golden death-mask with admiration. The craftsmanship was su-perb.

'They may not tell you,' Peri said as she joined him.

'Always be subtle,' he pointed out. 'Play it very loose, to use your parlance.' The Doctor always made fun of Peri's accent and Americanisms.

'May I help you?' came a squeaky voice behind them which made Peri jump.

They turned to see a squat, dumpy woman. She was wearing a blue tunic and her face was heavily made up with blue patterns.

'I don't think so,' smiled Peri. 'We're just looking.'

'Actually,' the Doctor cut in, 'we've come to see about a funeral.'

'I beg your pardon,' frowned Tasambeker, a blank look on her face.

'Er... a burial?' Again she gave him a blank look. 'Internment?' he offered.

'Inhumation? Sepulture? Obseque?'

'Ah yes,' she said, finally understanding. 'What you mean is perpetual instatement.'

The Doctor grinned. 'Yes.'

'And for whom do you wish this service?'

The Doctor's smile faded. 'Me.'

Takis punched his access code into the computer panel and waited for final verification.

Satisfied that the user had full clearance, the computer bid Takis welcome in its computer-ised female voice. 'How do you do, Mr Takis? And what is your pleasure?'

‘I want to know the E.T.A. of President Vargos’s ship.’

‘The Estimated Time of Arrival is approximately fifty-seven minutes,’ came the emotionless reply. The shutter covering a video scanner slid open to reveal a star chart of the Pherra system. At its centre, represented by a blue circle, was Necros. A green dot flashed in the top right hand corner and slowly moved towards the middle. At the bottom of the screen appeared a red dot.

‘There are two transponder codes,’ said Takis.

‘The second is for an unscheduled craft,’ came the response.

‘Direction?’

‘The planet Necros.’

He smiled and thanked the computer. ‘You are welcome,’ it said, and the screen closed.

Takis had given the current situation a lot of thought. The Great Healer had to be got rid of. And there was only one certain way that it could be achieved. The sub-space message he had sent in the hope that they would receive it had gotten through. The solution to all their problems was due to arrive at the same time as the President - in less than an hour...

Likewise at the factory, Kara and Vogel were watching the approach of the President’s ship on her own scanner.

‘Oh, what a delicious sight,’ she purred.

‘I’d think it would be safer, madam, if we shot it down,’ suggested Vogel.

But Kara shook her head. ‘That would be like an advertisement. No, Orcini will do his work, and we shall remain anonymous.’ She switched off the scanner. Had she left it on for a few seconds more, they would have seen another ‘blip’ approaching the planet...

Tasambeker took the Doctor and Peri to a small interview room. There she offered them refreshments. The Doctor politely declined but Peri, having sacrificed her lunch to the lake-monsters, bit hungrily into a green fruit which had a taste curiously similar to liquo-rice.

Tasambeker gave them a run-down of the services provided at Tranquil Repose. Peri found it all so boring but the Doctor took it all in with keen interest.

'Now,' Tasambeker was saying, 'if you should decide to accept our unique service your body will be cryogenically stabilised until the time came to revive you. Needless to say, your resting consciousness will be constantly updated with information concerning social, cultural and technological developments of your choice.' She leaned forward. 'We wouldn't want you to wake up feeling that the Universe had left you behind.'

Peri stifled a yawn. 'It all sounds so sterile.'

'For an extra fee, a small cost, you may purchase our personalised communication service.' Tasambeker pressed a button on a console and a screen lit up on the wall. With a musical fanfare, the face of the DJ appeared.

'Hi there!' he sang out. 'This is the DJ. Now, if you're missing your resting ones and want to tell them just how much, then why not call on me. For I am the messenger who connects your hearts with their hearts. So, I'll be hearing from ya!' Another fanfare sounded, and the screen shut off.

The sound of a familiar American accent perked Peri up. 'Hey, that's great. It's a little like the DJ's on Earth.'

'Precisely,' frowned the Doctor.

The early afternoon sun cast long shadows over the Garden of Fond Memories as it passed over the statues and sculptures. Two weary figures tramped across the snow, burdened with the heavy cases they carried.

Orcini and Bostock had been driven by Vogel from the factory in a hover-car and then unceremoniously dropped off a few kilometres from Tranquil Repose. Vogel told them that this was as close as he dared bring them in order to remain undetected by Davros's spy cameras.

After walking a short distance the two assassins rested briefly near a small woods.

Bostock had found a small mound of snow marked with a crude cross made from tree branches which he wanted to use for target-practice, but Orcini scolded him for having no respect for the dead.

Half an hour later they finally reached the outer skirts of their target's domain. Orcini

stopped and put down his case. He pulled a flask from of his shirt pocket, and took a swig.

'It's still a long way,' moaned Bostock. 'They could have brought us closer.'

‘The air will clear our minds,’ breathed Orcini, filling his lungs with the refreshingly chilly air. He swished his cane like a sabre, slicing at an invisible enemy. ‘Ever heard of a sword, Bostock?’

‘No, master.’

‘It was a weapon not unlike a large knife used on many planets for thousands of years.’

He stabbed again at his unseen opponent, yelling in triumph. ‘Even when it was superseded,’ he continued, ‘the sword was still carried ceremoniously.’

While Orcini continued his battle with the air, the squire studied the map given to them by Vogel.

Orcini thrust his cane into the heart of his imaginary foe. ‘The symbol of honour,’ he shouted in victory. ‘Something almost spiritual...’ Satisfied that the enemy was dead, Orcini ceased his theatrics and opened his case. He drew out a small machine-gun, and snapped the retractable shoulder-rest into place.

‘This is my sword, Bostock,’ he declared, cocking the breech.

‘You’re using that?’ frowned the squire.

‘And why not?’

‘It jammed on you last time. The thing’s obsolete.’

Orcini pointed to the medal displayed on his jacket. ‘You so easily forget. I’m a Knight of the Grand Order Of Oberon, and you are my squire. Where as I may have been temporarily excommunicated, I still try to live by the Order’s rules.’

‘I know, master. But that gun’s useless.’

Orcini smiled at his squire. ‘You must understand that this mission must be an honourable one. Nothing must taint or spoil it.’

‘I do understand, master.’

‘Only fools would take the risks I do...’

Orcini had been dismissed from the noble Order after he went through with an assassination that had been called off. Orcini feared that his reputation would be further tarnished if he didn’t complete that job as originally ordered. Now on his own, he was determined to regain the Order’s respect and rejoin them.

With the assassination of Davros, he believed he had the means to achieve his objective. ‘This will be my last mission,’ he said.

‘Yes, master?’ asked the loyal squire.

‘You may think that my judgement is clouded by the thoughts of honour. But my experience as a soldier has not deserted me.’

Bostock cared for his master and did not want to see him disillusioned. He offered Orcini a small hand gun. ‘Take this pistol - just in case.’

Orcini accepted the proffered weapon. He usually listened to Bostock’s advice. His artificial leg was a good reminder of the one time that he had ignored the little man’s intuition.

Suddenly Bostock tensed. ‘What was that?’

Orcini heard nothing. ‘What is it?’ he asked.

‘I sense something hostile.’ Bostock’s eyes darted around. There it was again, a slight sound coming from behind a row of statues. ‘It’s behind us!’ he yelled, hurling himself to the ground.

Orcini spun on his heel, and fired the machine-gun in a rapid burst. The Dalek sentry, almost invisible in the whiteness of the snow, exploded in a mighty fireball. Pieces of bonded polycarbide armour flew out like shrapnel in all directions.

Orcini was surprised by the damage caused by such a simple weapon. ‘The bullets are 42

fitted with explosive heads?’

Bostock nodded eagerly. ‘Yes, master!’ he grinned.

Sensing that the explosion could attract other Daleks, Orcini grabbed his case and ran into the shadows of the statues, with Bostock following close behind him...

An alarm sounded in Davros’s laboratory.

‘Alert! Alert! A-patrol-Dalek-has-been-destroyed!’ came the message.

‘So, it seems my agents were correct. Kara has employed assassins!’ Davros screamed.

He ordered a Dalek to immediately open a channel to the treacherous woman.

The Doctor, like Peri, found himself yawning as Tasambeker droned on.

‘Look,’ he interrupted. ‘I’m finding what you are saying absolutely fascinating, but when I said I was interested in my own burial -’

‘Perpetual Instatement,’ Peri corrected him.

‘Thank you. Perpetual Instatement - I was in fact referring to something a little more specific.’

‘What was that?’ enquired Tasambeker.

‘There is... was a statue of me in the Garden of Fond Memories, and what I would like to know is, who did it?’

‘That is not possible,’ she said, ‘without the express permission of the Great Healer.’

The Doctor felt his hearts miss a beat on hearing that name. He recalled the mutant’s hatred for this person. Was this Great Healer responsible for the statue?

‘I’d like to meet him,’ he said.

Tasambeker smiled at the Doctor’s request. She knew that the Great Healer would be watching and would be pleased with her progress so far. She desperately needed to prove her loyalty to him.

The interview over, she lead them back to the main Hall. The place was now busy as Attendants made final preparations for the Presidential visit.

‘We are preparing for a lying in state,’ explained Tasambeker. ‘President Vargos has given his permission to attend to the mortal remains of his dear late wife.’

‘Understood,’ Peri smiled back. The Doctor was going to be busy with the Great Healer for some length, and scientific talk did not interest her at all. She turned to the Doctor. ‘I wouldn’t mind meeting the DJ. I’m curious to find where he learned his patter.’

Jobel, who was adjusting the golden robe on the President’s wife’s corpse, saw them as they entered. ‘A-ha. There you are my pretty,’ he called out to Peri.

Tasambeker, thinking the compliment was intended for her, blushed. Jobel had never spoken to her like this before. ‘I’m taking this gentleman to see the Great Healer,’ she said.

‘That would be a contest worth missing,’ he mumbled. He smiled at Peri. ‘And what are you planning to do?’

‘Well, I’d quite like to meet the DJ.’

‘And why not,’ he said, clapping his hands. ‘Jobel will look after you.’ He took her arm in his.

Peri tried to pull away but his grip was very firm. ‘No, it’s alright. I’m okay.’ She forced a smile.

The Doctor held up his hand. ‘Excuse us one moment.’ He took Peri over to one side.

‘Go with him,’ he whispered. ‘I think from what we’ve learned, you’ll be good and safe with Mr Jobel...’ Peri started to protest. ‘...more so than you will with the Great Healer.’

‘But couldn’t we just go back to the TARDIS?’ She didn’t like the idea of being alone with Jobel for any length of time.

‘No. I want to find out more about this Great Healer. Remember the mutant?’ Peri nodded in resignation. The Doctor was right, as usual.

The Doctor returned to Tasambeker. ‘Have a nice day,’ he called to Peri.

‘With me as her escort,’ grinned Jobel, ‘she certainly shall.’ He took her arm again and led her away. She turned and gave the Doctor a final exasperated look. Tasambeker watched them leave.

‘What a nice man,’ the Doctor said. He noticed her expression. ‘Friend of yours?’

‘What’s it got to do with you?’ she snapped.

‘Absolutely nothing at all,’ he shrugged, somewhat taken aback by her sudden change in manner. ‘Only showing interest.’

Tasambeker turned and crossed to the doors leading to the freezing units. Her orders were to bring the Doctor to the Great Healer, and that was what she was doing. She opened the doors, and stepped aside to allow the Doctor to pass.

He smiled and stepped through - and found himself face to face with two Daleks. Their gun-sticks were pointing directly at him.

‘You-are-our-prisoner!’

‘You-will-not-resist.’

The Doctor spun around in an attempt to run back through the doors, but they were closed. His way was also blocked by two bearded men.

Takis stepped forward, raised his arm and chopped the Doctor across the back of the neck. The Time Lord dropped to the floor.

‘Bring-him!’ ordered a Dalek.

Takis took the Doctor’s feet, and Lilt lifted him by the shoulders. The Daleks escorted them down the corridor towards the catacombs. They moved down several levels until

they came to a corridor lined with doors. One of the Daleks operated a control and one of the doors opened. The Doctor was roughly shoved inside the room.

‘Secure-him!’ ordered a Dalek.

Lilt seized one of the Doctor’s ankles and manacled it to a chain attached to one wall.

He left the cell and the door closed behind him.

From the shadows Natasha and Grigory looked at their new cell-mate in bewilderment.

‘It is always a pleasure to speak to you, Great Healer,’ said Kara.

‘Indeed,’ intoned Vogel.

Davros leered at them from the video screen. Kara and Vogel had been waiting anxiously for word from Orcini. The only contact they had had with the assassin was his report that he and Bostock had penetrated the outer boundary of the complex. When the video signal chimed indicating that a communication was coming in, they immediately assumed it would be the Grand Master. Instead, it was the Great Healer.

‘A Dalek patrol has recently been destroyed,’ he informed them.

‘Outrageous,’ she said, trying to appear concerned. But inside she was laughing; no doubt this was Orcini’s work.

‘I believe that assassins are attempting to infiltrate my base. It concerns me that those attempting to kill me might also attempt the same with you.’

Kara smiled. ‘I have every faith in my guards. A fine body of men. I personally selected each and every one of them.’

‘Experience has shown me that humanoid life-forms are susceptible to bribery,’ Davros pointed out. ‘I would be happier if you were protected by those incapable of corruption.’

Davros was one step ahead of Kara. Indeed he was familiar with the ease with which guards could be bribed. Most of Kara’s guards were also on his payroll.

44

Kara realised what he had in mind. ‘You could only mean Daleks, Great Healer.’

‘Correct. I have already despatched a squad for your protection.’

‘Thank you, Great Healer.’ Again she forced herself to smile.

Satisfied, Davros closed the transmission and his image faded from the screen.

‘I think he only guesses, madam,’ said Vogel. He was a little worried.

‘He can guess what he likes. He won’t live to learn that he was right.’

‘I fear, madam, that you are perhaps placing too much trust in Orcini.’

But Kara was not to be cheated of her glory. ‘Orcini will succeed. And when he does, not only will I be rid of that troublesome Davros, but I will control the food supply for the whole galaxy!’

45

6

Death of a Chief Embalmer

The seemingly endless labyrinth of corridors stretched on and on. Peri was convinced that Jobel was purposely leading her astray so he could be alone with her. She shuddered at the thought. But her fears faded as the rhythmic sounds of music came pulsing down the corridor. Eventually Peri came to a circular glass door that accessed a large white room.

Peri could see the DJ inside, seated at his console and moving to the vibrant sounds of Rock ‘n’ Roll coming through his headphones.

‘Well, thank you for showing me the way,’ she smiled, with great relief.

Jobel leaned closer to her. ‘Those rose-red ruby lips were made for kissing,’ he said as he puckered his own.

‘But not by you,’ she retorted.

‘Oh, I love women who play hard to get!’

‘Then you’ll love me to death.’ She pulled back as Jobel advanced again, but she found herself forced up against the glass door. She was helpless as Jobel’s hands went on remote control and caressed her body. He closed his eyes and pursed his lips again. Peri shut her own eyes and her whole body went rigid as she prepared herself for the worst...

...but then the glass doors slid open from the pressure of her body against them, and Peri fell through the open gap. The doors closed again, and Jobel delivered his wet kiss onto the glass.

Peri breathed a heavy sigh of relief. Saved in the nick of time, she thought.

‘Wait!’ Jobel pleaded.

Peri waved back at him through the door. ‘I hope the lying in state goes well. And thanks for showing me the way.’

‘My pleasure, pretty one,’ said Jobel as he rubbed at the sticky wet impression of his lips on the door with his sleeve. He would never live this one down if it ever got out, he thought. With one final agonised look of desire at Peri, Jobel departed.

Peri looked around the at the chamber’s pleasing features. She noticed the modern-day paintings and works of art that decorated the room. They looked somewhat out of place amongst the ultra-modern sound equipment that dominated the place. The DJ was still ig-norant to her presence. She leaned over and tapped him lightly on the shoulder.

The DJ leaped out of his chair in fright. He spun around and whipped off the headphones.

‘Hi,’ she said, nervously. ‘I hope you don’t mind me dropping in?’

The DJ caught his breath. ‘No, no. It’s nice to have visitors.’ Peri frowned. The American accent he had used on his commercial was gone. Instead, he spoke with a hint of Cockney.

‘I’m Peri,’ she said, holding out her hand.

He shook it. ‘Is that your real accent?’

‘I hope so!’ she laughed.

‘Amazing!’ was all he could say.

‘And speaking of accents,’ she said, ‘yours seems to have changed.’

The DJ shuffled his feet. ‘Ah, yes. Well, that’s just my other voice, you know. I use that just for professional duties.’

‘I knew it was too good to be true,’ she said with disappointment in her voice. ‘I thought that maybe you came from the States.’

The DJ's mouth dropped open. 'You don't mean the United States? Of America? On Earth?'

'That's right!'

'Amazing,' he said, shaking his head in disbelief.

'Have you been there?'

'No, no. It's just that I've heard recordings, you know. My great-granddad brought them back from one of his visits. And I really love the sounds of those old American DJ's.

So, I decided to base my style of presentation on them.'

'It's very good.'

'Thank you.'

'It makes me almost homesick.' She hadn't seen her home-town for some time now.

She had been on her summer vacation in Lanzarote with her mother and step-father when she first met the Doctor, and was in turn plunged into the sort of adventure she could only before dream about. The Doctor had agreed to let her stay with him for the three month summer vacation before having to return to school. However the Doctor's sudden regeneration changed all that and the 'new' Doctor had not even attempted to return her home.

He seemed more interested in zooming around the universe instead.

'I'm glad that somebody likes it,' said the DJ. He had never had any criticism before; his regular listeners never complained about his work. Except one, that is.

'It doesn't half aggravate the Great Healer,' he added.

But the Great Healer was far from being aggravated at the moment. Tasambeker had returned with her report of the Doctor's capture. Davros was smiling.

'You have pleased me.'

'Thank you, Great Healer.'

'Show me Jobel,' he ordered one of his Dalek sentries.

The Chief Embalmer's features appeared on the video screen. 'I am told that you have affection for this man?'

'I did once.' Tasambeker swallowed hard.

‘He is a difficult man. Arrogant, wouldn’t you agree?’

She nodded.

‘I once offered him immortality,’ the Great Healer confessed. ‘He turned it down!’

‘He’s a fool, then,’ she spat, ‘as well as being arrogant.’

Davros chuckled. ‘I agree. But I sense that you still have affection for him.’

‘No!’ she cried. But she realised that the only person she was fooling was herself.

‘Yes,’ she sighed, ‘though I don’t know why. He’s always humiliating me.’

‘So I have observed. If someone treated me the way he treated you I think I would have them killed.’

Tasambeker looked up at Jobel’s image. ‘Kill him? No, I couldn’t do that.’

‘No? Then watch him. Use the security cameras to observe his activities. Then tell me that your hatred does not grow!’

She couldn’t take her eyes off the screen and the face of the man she loved. Could she kill him? It was too terrible to contemplate. But if the Great Healer wished it of her, then 47

she had no other choice than to obey.

The Doctor moaned and rolled onto his side. The room was spinning. When it had stabilised, he sat up and rubbed the back of his neck. Who am I...? Where am I...? Daleks? ...no, couldn’t have been. I must be dreaming...

He tried to stand, but his efforts were impeded by the fact that his left ankle was chained to a wall.

‘Who are you?’ came a voice behind him.

He turned to see a man and a woman, both chained by their wrists. ‘Hello, I’m the Doctor. And who are you?’

Grigory hiccupped and introduced himself and Natasha, but the Doctor could sense his apprehension. After all, they were prisoners, and he was a total stranger. For all they knew he could be a spy sent to gain their confidence. The Doctor raised his eyebrows on hearing Natasha’s name.

‘Stengos?’ he frowned. ‘As in Arthur Stengos?’

‘He was my father. Did you know him?’

Without trying to shock the poor girl, the Doctor explained who he was and why he had come to Necros. At first Natasha could not accept that this was the same Doctor who had visited her father all those years ago. He didn't even act, let alone look the same, but when the Doctor recounted the fig tree story, she was finally convinced.

While Natasha told him of what she and Grigory were doing here at Tranquil Repose, the Doctor set to work picking the lock on his shackle using a small piece of wire he found on the floor. After fifteen minutes work he had made little progress.

'Not doing very well, are you,' criticised Grigory.

The Doctor ignored him. It's moments like these I wish I still had my sonic screw-driver, he thought.

Natasha continued her story. The Doctor's ears pricked up when she mentioned the Daleks. 'What are the Daleks doing here?' he asked.

'Body snatching,' replied Natasha. 'They've stolen my father's body and they were turning him into a Dalek.'

'It was horrible,' coughed Grigory, the memory of the glass Dalek still strong in his mind. 'It was growing, just like an embryo.'

'Growing?' echoed the Doctor. 'So, Davros has finally done it. Daleks that can reproduce anywhere.'

'It's a tremendous feat of genetic engineering,' added Grigory.

'It's a pity,' the Time Lord growled, 'he didn't put it to better use.'

This startling new revelation made the Doctor think back to his previous encounters with Davros. The Doctor had been there, at the very beginning - at the birth of the Daleks.

He had been sent to Skaro by the Time Lords with the task of destroying the Daleks at their genesis. The Doctor failed, and Davros was seen to have been destroyed by his own creations.

The Doctor revisited Skaro many thousands of years later only to discover that Davros was very much alive. The Daleks had also returned to Skaro. They needed their creator's knowledge to help win their battle against the Movellans. They failed and Davros was taken to Earth to stand trial for war-crimes against humanity. His sentence was indefinite suspended animation.

For ninety long years he remained in a state of semi-consciousness. In the outer regions of the galaxy the Daleks were being destroyed by the Movellan virus. The Supreme Dalek itself lead a special taskforce to attack the space station prison because once again they 48

needed his help. Only Davros could redesign their genetic structure and cure the affliction.

The Doctor (then in his fifth body) had gone to Davros's laboratory determined to execute the evil genius. But Davros pleaded for his life, promising that he would reprogram his creations with emotions, and create a new breed of Dalek. The Doctor foolishly believed him and the execution was stayed. When the space station's self destruct was activated, the Doctor was certain that Davros was killed in the explosion.

From what Natasha had told him, the Doctor surmised that the few remaining Daleks must have come here to Necros, and with the help of this Great Healer person, they were stealing bodies from the cryogenic chambers and mutating the sleepers into Dalek/human hybrids.

Tranquil Repose was now nothing more than a storage larder for a Dalek breeding col-ony!

Vogel and Kara were celebrating their victory-to-be over a bottle of expensive Moranian champagne.

They were interrupted by a shrill beep beep from her desk. Kara put down her glass and crossed over to the communications console, where a light was also flashing. It was a signal from Orcini.

'They have reached the catacombs,' she informed her secretary. 'Wonderful! It's now only a matter of time before he finds Davros's laboratory, taps out the sequence code - and blows Davros, himself, and that disgusting little squire into a thousand tiny little pieces!'

She returned to Vogel. As they raised glasses in a toast, the door opened.

'How dare you enter unannounced!' Vogel scolded the new arrivals. His mouth dropped as two Daleks glided in.

'You-will-come-with-us!' one shrieked.

'You-will-be-taken-to-Davros-to-answer-for-your-crimes,' said the other.

The bodyguards sent by Davros had arrived. But Kara knew they had come for another purpose. They were her escorts to certain death. Davros had indeed suspected their treachery.

Vogel seized his chance and made a dash for the door. The first Dalek spun to face him and delivered a fatal blast. It sliced into him, and he dropped to his knees, his eyes wide with surprise. He held out a hand to his mistress, then collapsed to the floor like a puppet whose strings had suddenly been severed.

‘You-will-obey!’ grated a Dalek, its eye-stalk focussing on Kara as she knelt down beside Vogel’s body. Tears welled up in her eyes.

‘How inconvenient,’ she sobbed. ‘You know how difficult it is to find good secretaries these days.’

‘You-will-come-with-us!’ The Dalek prodded her with its sucker-arm. She rose to her feet and was led away...

The President’s ship was less than half an hour away from landing. If the President’s ship was due to land soon, so was the other mysterious craft that was approaching Necros.

Takis decided it was time that he told Lilt of what he had done to rid them of the Great Healer. Lilt was unsure at first, but Takis convinced him that it was the only solution.

Takis considered it wise to let Jobel in on the plan. They found him in the main Hall, supervising the last minute details for the upcoming instatement.

‘Don’t you find that a lot of strange things have been happening around here recently?’

Takis asked the Chief Embalmer.

‘Not more bad news,’ sighed Jobel. The deaths of three of his staff today was all he 49

could bear.

‘I was talking generally. In fact, I don’t think that things have been the same since the Great Healer took over!’

‘Guard your tongue!’ warned Jobel. ‘He has eyes and ears everywhere!’ He glanced nervously at the camera on the wall behind Takis.

‘I think it was time that something was done,’ Takis whispered.

‘You do? But could you?’

‘With a little help,’ nodded Takis.

Jobel wagged his finger at Takis. ‘You’re a very naughty man, Takis.’

‘So,’ Lilt spoke, ‘are you interested then, Mr Jobel?’

Jobel shrugged. ‘I never was very keen on all this Dalek business.’

Takis and Lilt looked at one another and nodded. ‘I think then that we should have a little chat...’ smiled Takis.

‘Absolutely,’ replied Jobel. ‘But can we get the Perpetual Instatement sorted out first?’

Takis nodded his agreement, and left with Lilt.

A female Attendant stepped up to Jobel and handed to him a flower. Jobel put his arm around her waist, pulled her close to him and kissed her on the cheek.

‘I love you,’ he laughed mischievously.

Tasambeker turned away from the scanner and closed her eyes. She had seen enough. The Great Healer was right; Jobel was a fool.

The Great Healer had also been watching. But his interest lay more in the plot that was unfolding against him. First Kara, then Takis and Lilt, and now Jobel. ‘This man you respect now conspires against me! His infidelity is bad enough, but his treason is unforgiv-able!’

Tasambeker turned pleadingly at the Great Healer. ‘Let me speak to him...’

‘It is too late for words!’

A Dalek glided forward. ‘He-should-be-exterminated!’

‘No!’ she screamed.

But Davros had heard enough. ‘It is time for you to decide to whom your loyalties be-long.’

‘To you, of course.’

‘That is easy to say. But I require a positive commitment as proof.’

Tasambeker glanced at the floor. She couldn’t bear look into the Great Healer’s face.

‘What do you want me to do?’

Davros remained silent as he contemplated the task for her to perform. When he eventually spoke, Tasambeker felt a chill run down her spine.

‘I once offered Jobel immortality. He refused. I now make the same offer to you. Serve me with your total being, and I shall allow you to become a Dalek!’

She gulped. ‘It is an offer I cannot refuse.’

This pleased Davros. ‘It is an offer that must be fulfilled - through blood!’

She suddenly realised what the Great Healer was asking of her. She looked up Jobel’s image on the screen.

‘Show me your total obedience -’ shrieked Davros, ‘ - and kill Jobel!’

Kara’s maps had shown details of many forgotten tunnels and passages that ran beneath the complex. Orcini and Bostock had been able to penetrate the catacombs of Tranquil Repose with considerable ease.

On reaching the lowest level, they signaled Kara as arranged, and were now creeping

down a corridor lined with doors. Orcini felt uneasy. As an assassin he had crept down many a tunnel, hidden in many a closet, and lurked behind many a grassy knoll. But this time, things just didn’t seem right. It was all too easy, in fact.

As if to further his fears, a guard appeared from around a corner. Startled by the sight of two armed intruders, the guard had no time to draw his gun - giving Bostock the advantage to grab him by the throat and start choking. Bostock was about to deliver the final blow to the man’s neck when Orcini stopped him. Reluctantly, Bostock let the unconscious guard slump to the floor.

‘You should have let me kill him, master.’

‘I appreciate your dedication, Bostock,’ explained Orcini. ‘But he’s very unimportant.’

‘But, master...’

‘No! In fact I would have preferred him conscious.’

Bostock frowned, not understanding.

‘Questions are accumulating, and I would very much like the answers to them.’

The squire could detect a touch of anxiety in his master’s voice. ‘What’s wrong?’

‘I’ve been feeling that we haven’t been told the whole truth.’

‘You mean we’ve been set up?’

‘You’re the one with the infallible instincts, you tell me.’ Orcini was beginning to believe that Kara had in mind an even more sinister motive for sending them into the catacombs. Suddenly he felt exposed. ‘We need a diversion. A scapegoat.’

He glanced at the doors lining the corridor and noticed that each had a monitor set into the wall. He watched the screen by the door nearest to them. He could see the room inside, containing three people - two men and a woman.

‘Ah, prisoners,’ smiled Orcini. ‘Release them.’

Bostock frowned again.

‘Scapegoats!’ said Orcini.

Bostock grinned in understanding, and set to work on the door panel.

After considerable effort, the Doctor eventually picked the locks of his own bonds, and quickly set to work on releasing his new friends. He smiled with satisfaction as Natasha’s manacles sprang open. She rubbed her sore wrists.

Behind them, the door to the cell slowly opened. Fearing the return of the Daleks, the Doctor dashed behind the door, ready to leap out.

Orcini cautiously entered the cell. With a Venusian Aikido yell, the Doctor jumped out of hiding and grabbed Orcini’s arm. The Doctor tried to force the man to the ground but was unexpectedly met with powerful resistance.

Orcini threw the heavy Time Lord over his shoulder with very little effort, sending him crashing to the cold stone floor.

‘Who are you?’ asked Natasha, looking at the strangers with interest.

The Doctor rose to his feet, rubbing the back of his neck. He pointed to the silver medal hanging on Orcini’s chest. ‘A Knight of the Grand Order of Oberon,’ he announced. ‘Only I would be stupid enough to attack such a person.’

‘Be grateful that you are still alive,’ sneered Bostock.

‘I am. I am,’ nodded the Doctor.

Orcini levelled his gun at the prisoners. ‘You are now free. But you will count slowly to twenty once we have gone. If you attempt to follow us, I will kill you. Do you understand?’

‘Ah, yes,’ gulped Grigory, then he let out a loud burp.

To his complete surprise, the Doctor was offered Orcini’s gun. ‘You may need this,’ the 51

knight said.

The Doctor hated guns. But in these circumstances he reasoned it was better not to refuse. He took the weapon. ‘May I ask what you are doing here?’

‘You may,’ replied Orcini, ‘but only a fool would expect an answer.’ With that, he and Bostock disappeared into the corridor.

Natasha gave the Doctor a ‘what do we do now’ look. The Doctor shrugged.

Behind them, Grigory slowly started counting. ‘One... two... three...’

The President’s ship was beginning its final approach. The landing port was getting ready to accept the space vessel.

In the main Hall, the Attendants were putting the finishing touches to the decorations. A blue carpet had been positioned across the floor from the reception doors to the dais. ‘I think we need more of these,’ Takis said, pointing to the purple flower on the body. He noticed they were starting to wilt.

Jobel sighed heavily. ‘I am told that she loved the fragrance of nature.’

Takis moved away to get more of the weed plant and passed Tasambeker, who had just entered the Hall.

‘Mr Jobel!’ she called.

‘Not now, Tasambeker. Can’t you see I’m busy?’ He hoped she would go away.

‘But it’s important! I have a message from the Great Healer.’ Jobel glanced at the all-seeing eye of the camera mounted on the wall above them.

‘Why didn’t you say then?’ he said, forcing a smile.

‘You must leave with me!’ she pleaded.

He looked at her large plump body. ‘That’s the bluntest proposal I’ve had all week.’ He shuddered at the thought of being alone with her.

‘If you don’t come with me, you’ll die!’ Tears fell from her eyes. ‘The Great Healer hates you!’

‘That’s impossible. I’ve always been his loyal servant.’ Once more he glanced at the camera. He knew the Great Healer would be watching.

‘Not when you conspire with Takis.’

Jobel felt a sudden chill engulf him. His meeting with Takis and Lilt had been observed by the Great Healer after all. ‘That was a joke,’ he laughed. ‘A bit of fun...’

But Tasambeker was not convinced. ‘He wants you dead!’

‘Dead?’ he laughed. ‘Me? I am Jobel. This place wouldn’t function without me.’

He pushed past her and walked over to his office. Tasambeker waddled behind him like a two-legged hippopotamus. Jobel lovingly studied himself in the mirror and straightened his hair-piece.

‘The Great Healer doesn’t care about Tranquil Repose. Already he’s turned it into a breeding ground for Daleks!’ she cried.

‘Now I know you are lying,’ said Jobel. ‘I spoke with him the other day. He has tremendous pride for this place. There certainly wasn’t any talk of turning it into a Dalek-farm.’

‘He lies as freely as you pick up women,’ she burst.

Jobel nodded in understanding. ‘Oh, so that’s what this is all about.’

‘Mr Jobel - I love you. I’m risking my life talking to you like this.’

Jobel took off his spectacles and polished them with his apron. ‘We’ve spent too many hours in this preparation room,’ he sighed. ‘Someone as impressionable as you should lav-ish little more time on the living instead of fantasising with the dead.’

But Tasambeker would not be dismissed so easily. ‘You’ve got to get away from here. I 52

can help you!’

‘Do you now?’ He was sick and tired of her school-girl infatuation with him. ‘Do you honestly think that I could possibly be interested in you? I have the pick of the women here. I would rather run away with my own mother than a fawning little creep like you.’

‘I knew you could be cruel,’ she cried. ‘But even you have excelled yourself.’

As Jobel gazed once more at his reflection, Tasambker inhaled deeply, trying to find the biggest insult she could deliver to him. ‘To think that I almost threw away everything, for a fat, balding, egotist like you!’

Jobel was taken aback at this sudden burst of emotion. ‘Fat? Me? Fat? My figure is at the height of fashion!’ He sucked in his stomach and studied his profile in the mirror. He gave himself a nod of approval and pushed past her into the Hall.

Tasambeker stood alone in the office, crying. Her attempts had failed. The Great Healer was expecting her to do as he had ordered.

On a table she saw a silver instrument tray. A syringe, half-filled with green embalming fluid, lay invitingly exposed. She made up her mind, and seized the syringe. Holding it like a knife, she ran after her mentor.

‘The Great Healer has ordered you dead!’ she shouted.

At the foot of the dais steps Jobel stopped. ‘We shall see about that. I shall speak to him myself.’

Tasambeker overtook him and mounted the steps. She stood over him, the needle raised high above her head. ‘You just don’t understand,’ she begged. ‘To earn his favour I am to kill you!’

The Hall fell silent as the Attendants watched the drama unfolding before them.

‘Get on with your work!’ Jobel ordered them. He took his eyes off the ranting Tasambeker for only a second.

She took this opportunity. ‘I hate you!’ she screamed and she plunged the needle into his heart. Crying with regret, and for fear of her own safety, Tasambeker ran from the Hall.

Jobel stood for a few minutes, staring at the needle embedded in his chest, a look of complete surprise on his face. ‘She’s... killed... Jobel...’ he stammered, and collapsed to the ground. As his head cracked against the marble floor, his toupee fell off.

Jobel, the Chief Embalmer, was dead.

Tasambeker ran down the corridors with no particular destination in mind. Exhausted, she leant against a wall, and sobbed. ‘Oh why did I do it?’

Two Daleks appeared at her side. She gazed at them in fear. Had the Great Healer sent them to escort her to his laboratory? Maybe he had seen her try and warn Jobel? She stood at attention, waiting for them to speak.

‘You-are-to-be-exterminated!’ they grated.

Tasambeker realised that the Great Healer only wanted her for one purpose - to kill Jobel. He now had no further use for her. His offer of a position had been nothing more than a ruse. She tried to run from them, but her stubby legs were not fast enough. The double beams from the Daleks engulfed her, and her smouldering body crumpled to the floor.

Davros turned off his scanner. Another traitor had been disposed of. Soon the others would be dealt with. In time, he would emerge from the catacombs with his Daleks, and nothing would be able to stop him!

Walking into a Trap

Peri and the DJ were happily talking. She told him about the beauty of Earth and he listened with great envy.

Something on the scanner caught his attention, and he zoomed the monitor in on the image. Peri smiled as she saw the Doctor moving cautiously down a dark passage. There were two strangers with him. ‘There’s the Doctor!’

‘That’s not very good news,’ said the DJ. ‘Those people he’s with are the body snatchers I was telling you about.’

‘Can I speak to him?’

‘Yeah, sure.’ He adjusted a control on the console, and picked up his headphones...

Once Grigory had finished counting to twenty, the trio left their cell. The Doctor wanted to go to the incubation room. He wanted to see for himself the terrible atrocities that were in there.

As they cautiously crept along a corridor a voice echoed out of nowhere. ‘Hello, Doctor? This is the DJ, with a very special message for you.’

The Doctor stopped.

‘Doctor. Can you hear me?’ It was Peri.

He smiled. ‘I can indeed,’ he replied.

‘I was so worried about you,’ she said.

‘I’m perfectly safe.’ He spied a camera which was hidden in the shadows. ‘Now listen to me, Peri. I want you to go back to the TARDIS at once.’

‘But...’

‘No questions. You’re in great danger, and there are bound to be others monitoring this.’

She saw the fear in his eyes. ‘I’m on my way.’

‘When you get to the TARDIS, radio the President’s ship. Say that there are Daleks here, and that he’s not to land.’

‘What about you?’ she asked anxiously.

‘I shall join you later. Now, go!’

The Doctor was right. There were others monitoring the transmission. Davros smiled. The Doctor's companion would make an excellent hostage. He turned to a Dalek. 'Bring that woman to me.'

'At-once.'

'And while you are there, kill that prattling DJ!'

Peri handed back the microphone, and headed for the door. The DJ ran past her and blocked her path.

54

'Get out of my way!' Peri cried.

But the DJ wouldn't move. 'You're not thinking, Peri.'

'Please. Just get out of the way!' She tried to push him aside, but he wouldn't budge.

'How far do you think you'll get?' he said, trying to make her see reason. 'The Doctor was right. They would have intercepted his message. They'll be waiting for you!'

'No. I must go...'

With little alternative, the DJ forcefully pulled her away from the door. 'I've got a radio transmitter here,' he explained. 'You can use that.'

'And risk your life as well?' she cried. 'It just doesn't make sense.'

'It's too late for that now. They know that you've spoken to me. They won't let that go unchecked.'

Peri nodded. The DJ was right. She then glanced up at the scanner. On it she could see several white robotic things; the same as the thing she'd seen in the Garden of Fond Memories. These must be the 'Daleks' that the Doctor spoke of. From the seriousness in his voice they were extremely dangerous – and they were coming to kill them!

The Doctor stepped from the incubation room, his face grimly set. It would be easy enough to shut the place down but the only way to be sure of permanent results would be to destroy it totally. The Doctor decided to leave this important task to Grigory and Natasha. He had business of his own to attend to. He had to confront this so-called Great Healer.

'We'll meet later at the reception area,' he said. He then wished them luck, and disappeared down the corridor.

‘Are you out of your mind?’ Grigory asked Natasha. ‘You’re not going back in there?

In a minute this place will be crawling with Daleks!’

Natasha, having had enough of his whinging, thrust her gun under his nose. He gazed down the barrel, his eyes wide at this sudden display of violence from his companion. ‘A flimsy but nevertheless convincing argument,’ he gulped.

They entered the room. The heart-beat echoed in their ears. Natasha crossed over to the brain tank. She levelled her weapon at the tank and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened.

She tried again. Still nothing. ‘The power pack’s exhausted!’ she cried. ‘How do we kill them?’

Grigory studied the control panel. The buttons looked simple enough to operate. He started pressing them at random.

Davros turned to the lone Dalek in his chamber. ‘Activate a specimen, then leave me.’ The Dalek obeyed. Davros continued his observation of the incubator room...

As Grigory pressed the controls, the red light in the tank began to fade. However the room was still bathed in a fierce white glow from another corner. A Dalek was materialising on the low platform that had previously held Natasha’s father. As the Dalek glided off, Natasha heard the noise and spun around.

‘There’s another Dalek! Let’s get out of here!’

Grigory continued working on the control panel. ‘What we need is a grenade. That would deal with it.’ He looked up to see where Natasha was pointing. There was nothing there.

‘It’s gone!’ she screamed.

‘It can’t have got far. We would have heard it leave, wouldn’t we?’

Suddenly a terrifying howl, like a thousand voices all screaming at once, echoed around 55

the chamber. Natasha ran for the door, but it would not open. A shadow passed over head.

She looked upwards.

Grigory followed her gaze. Hovering over them was the Dalek. It loomed over them like a ghost. Natasha screamed.

The Dalek howled once more, and fired its weapon. Their bodies twisted and distorted as the energy beam tore them apart. The burnt corpses slumped to the ground. The Dalek ceased its attack and dematerialised.

After leaving their scapegoats to fend for themselves, Orcini and Bostock made their way deeper into the catacombs. Eventually they came to the tunnel that, according to the maps, connected with Davros's chamber.

Moving quietly down the corridor, they came to an open archway. Through this was the old chapel that was now the Great Healer's lair. Bostock peered into the room. Although there were no Daleks to be seen, there was one human guard. In the centre of the chamber was the glass dome, through which their target was visible, back turned.

Orcini nodded to Bostock, then twisted the head of his cane. A thin metal spike shot out. Holding the cane like a javelin, the Grand Master threw it into the chamber and it embedded itself in the floor.

Davros spun around at the sudden noise. 'Remove that object.'

The guard moved over to the cane, and pulled it out. Cautiously, he moved over to the archway and peered around the corner. The last thing he saw was a dirty little man advancing on him with a knife...

Bostock lowered the guard's body to the ground and pulled his knife from between the man's ribs. He then checked that the safety catch was off his weapon.

Orcini recovered his cane from the guard's hand, and primed his own gun. Together, the two assassins leapt into the chamber, their aim concentrated upon the centre of the glass cylinder.

The bullets bounced off the protective dome and thudded into the walls, where they detonated.

But Davros was not weaponless. A lightning bolt of energy flashed out from the mechanical eye on his forehead. It zigzagged out and exploded on the wall behind Orcini. The Grand Master jumped back into the corridor, with Bostock fast behind him.

'You fools!' screeched Davros. 'You can't kill me! I am Davros!'

Now aware of their target's defensive capabilities, Orcini formulated a quick plan.

Once ready, they leapt back into the chamber, this time firing directly at the panels at the base of the dome. The console exploded.

Davros screamed as his life-support systems suddenly cut off. A thick black smoke filled the dome.

The assassins stopped firing and watched as their enemy writhed and thrashed within the glass chamber. There was another explosion and everything was silent. Orcini peered into the smoking dome. Inside, the once Great Healer was very dead.

‘We’ve done it, master,’ rejoiced Bostock. ‘We’ve killed him!’

But Orcini did not share his squire’s excitement. His mind was telling him that Davros would surely have had better security measures than that. No, something was definitely wrong. ‘Has your instinct deserted you? That was far too easy.’

‘That you have realised far too late!’ sneered a voice from the archway. They turned to see a familiar figure seated in a mobile chair. Davros!

‘Grand Master Orcini, place your guns on the floor,’ ordered the resurrected Great 56

Healer.

Realising that they had little choice, the assassins complied. But Bostock had other plans. He wasn’t going to give up so easily. He pulled his dagger from his sleeve and threw it at Davros. The blade drove deep into Davros’s neck. Orcini snatched up his gun, and fired a rapid burst at the chair.

Davros pulled out the blade and quickly moved out of range. ‘Daleks!’ he screamed.

From both entrances swarmed white Daleks, their weapons firing. Orcini received a direct hit on his left leg. With a flash of sparks, the bionic limb blew off and smashed against a wall. This caused Orcini to lose his balance and he collapsed to the ground.

Bostock grabbed his own gun and fired at the advancing Daleks. One was hit on the head-dome and the explosive bullets detonated, taking the eye-stalk from its housing. It dangled uselessly by its cable.

‘My-vision-is-impaired! I-cannot-see!’

Bostock ran over to his fallen master and, using his body to shield Orcini, fired again.

The Daleks were much stronger and they fired back. Bostock took a heavy hit to his arm. He dropped his gun, and collapsed on top of it.

From the corridor outside Davros watched the battle. When he saw that both assassins were out of the fighting he glided back into the chamber. He flicked a switch on the control panel affixed to his chair and the chair began to slowly rise. He manoeuvred himself until he was hovering directly over the two men.

‘You are a fool, Orcini. And you are old.’ He raised his right hand and pointed at the knight. A bolt zigzagged from his finger-tip and it struck Orcini full in the chest. The Grand Master convulsed with pain as his nervous system was blasted with the intense energy.

‘Your reflexes have gone,’ continued Davros. ‘Do you think that you are the first to try and kill me?’ Orcini struggled to rise, but the pain was too great.

‘That dome was but a simple lure for the assassin’s bullet. A puppet controlled by me.’

Davros stopped his attack on Orcini and lowered himself to the ground. Orcini’s body gave a final twitch and was still.

‘Search them!’ ordered Davros.

In the DJ’s studio, nothing but static issued from the loudspeaker. The President’s ship was not responding. Peri had been trying for ten minutes to warn the approaching vessel.

‘Come in. Over,’ Peri called once more.

Static.

She looked to the DJ. ‘The ship doesn’t answer.’

‘Wait a moment,’ the DJ said. He was busy setting up what looked like a cannon mounted on a tripod in the middle of the chamber. He went over to the console and pressed a few buttons. On the video scanner a star-chart appeared. The green ‘blip’ representing the Presidential ship had stopped. Then it started to move backwards, away from Necros.

‘They heard,’ he voiced.

The scanner image changed to the view outside the room. A Dalek was moving into position outside in the corridor.

‘And just in time!’ He returned to his position behind the cannon.

‘This may sound like a dumb question,’ Peri asked, ‘but what does that thing do?’

‘The cannon? Oh, it’s a highly directional ultrasonic beam of Rock and Roll.’ He pulled the trigger, and a colourful kaleidoscope of energy rays shot out, melting the wall opposite.

Peri’s mouth dropped in horror.

The DJ turned to her, his face full of hate. ‘It kills!’

The unconscious Bostock was left where he had fallen, his gun hidden beneath him. Because the Squire was no threat to them in that state, the guards concentrated on Orcini instead. The knight was lifted by the guards and dropped into a chair. After a quick search, they found Kara's transmitter strapped to his belt.

'Intriguing,' said Davros, studying the device. 'A box of delight. Or a box of hate?'

As if in response to his question, Kara was roughly pushed into the room by a guard.

'My dear Davros,' she said, trying to act the innocent.

Davros held up the box. 'Yours, I believe?'

'Oh, what a pretty little box. What does it do?'

'You should know. It is a transmitter brought by your assassins.'

Kara looked at Orcini nervously. He stared back at her, his face expressionless.

'How could you say such a thing, Great Healer?' She tried to laugh, but all that issued was a strained squeak.

Davros glided closer to her. 'I have never trusted you, Kara.'

'I am pained by such a remark. I have served you well.'

Orcini spoke for the first time. 'Tell him.'

Kara moved over to the Grand Master. 'I am an innocent party. I refuse to be drawn into your conspiracy.'

Davros handed the transmitter to a guard. 'Give this to Orcini.'

Kara looked at Davros, panic showing in her face. 'Is that wise, Great Healer? By your own statement, he is a murderer - a common assassin.'

'He is a Knight of the Grand Order of Oberon,' replied Davros. 'There is little that is common about Orcini.'

He turned to face the Grand Master. 'Now, show me what you have to do with the box.'

Orcini studied Kara's emotionless face. Without taking his eyes of her he punched in the first four digits of the coded sequence: 1… 1… 8… 6… His thumb poised over the 4…

Kara's eyes widened with fear. 'No!' she cried.

'Proceed,' ordered Davros.

Orcini slowly pressed the final button...

‘No!’ Kara screamed. ‘It’s a bomb!’

Orcini hastily withdrew his thumb from the button.

‘It’s a great big bomb!’ Kara repeated.

‘Thank you, Kara,’ giggled Davros.

She hung her head in defeat, then glared at Orcini. ‘You’re a fool!’ she spat. ‘You imbecile! I thought you were a man of honour. Now we both die! Satisfied?’

He raised his right hand as if he was going to shake hers. ‘You before me...’ he said.

His snapped his fingers, and the needle thin blade shot from his sleeve. He thrust forward and drove the steel into her heart. He pulled the blade sideways, carving a deep gash across her chest. Her eyes bulged wide and blood trickled from her mouth. Orcini wrenched out the knife and watched without remorse as Kara’s lifeless body slumped to the ground.

Peri screamed as the glass door of the DJ’s chamber exploded inwards.

‘Keep your head down,’ warned the DJ.

The Dalek appeared in the open doorway. ‘You-must-surrender,’ it grated. ‘The-Earth-woman-is-to-come-with-us. It-is-useless-to-resist.’

The DJ swung the sonic cannon into position and fired. The rays zagged out and struck the Dalek. The polycarbide shell vibrated in sympathy with the sound waves as they bounced off it. Minute cracks began to appear.

Then it exploded.

The shell split open and a blob of something fell from within. Peri felt her stomach churn when she saw that the blob was part of a man. It reminded her of the mutant that attacked the Doctor, but this time the mutation was far more advanced. The thing twitched then lay still.

‘Yee-haa!’ shouted the DJ, beating his fist in the air in triumph.

‘You did it,’ rejoiced Peri.

‘That’s right.’ The DJ picked up his headphones and put them on. Even in the face of death the show must go on. He had a broadcast to make: ‘Hey, you guys. This is the DJ...’

The Doctor was lost. He was sure that the Great Healer’s chamber was on this level but he seemed to be only going round in circles. All the corridors looked identical.

He had been doing a lot of thinking ever since Natasha told him about what happened to her father. The evidence in the incubation room had furthered his suspicions. He had seen something similar once before in the breeding chambers on Skaro. But there was one thing he just couldn’t understand - how had the Daleks achieved such an advancement in their evolution when the last time he encountered them they were facing extinction thanks to the Movellans?

The TARDIS computer had shown that the current Necrosian year was relative to about a decade after the Daleks’ failed attempt to rescue their creator from his prison. The mutant said he was a product of experiments performed by this Great Healer, and Natasha and Grigory had spoken of the wonderful things this person had supposedly done for Tranquil Repose. Is this Great Healer the one who is making Daleks from the bodies resting in Tranquil Repose? And why?

Then a horrible thought dawned on him. Perhaps Davros didn’t perish in the explosion of the prison ship after all. Perhaps he is here on Necros. Could Davros be the Great...

His thoughts were interrupted as the DJ’s voice came echoing down the passage.

‘...this is the DJ with a broadcast to...’

‘Look out!’ cut in Peri’s voice. ‘More Daleks!’

Peri was in danger! The Doctor took to his heels, and ran down the corridor as fast as he could...

The siege at the DJ’s room continued. Further Dalek forces were arriving. One pushed aside the smouldering remains of the dead Dalek in the doorway, and fired a quick burst into the room.

The DJ fired back - but missed.

The Dalek beams struck the far wall. Peri ducked as the video scanner behind her exploded.

Gritting his teeth, the DJ fired again, and again.

Another Dalek exploded. Then there was silence.

The DJ stood up. The other Daleks seemed to have retreated. He turned and smiled at Peri. ‘Yee-haa!’

Suddenly two Daleks appeared at the door.

‘Look out!’ screamed Peri. But she was too late. The DJ was cut down by the double beams of energy. His body disintegrated.

‘You murdered him!’ she cried.

‘You murdered him... murdered him... him...’ Peri’s voice echoed down the corridor, bringing the Doctor to a halt.

59

‘Why did you have to-’ Her voice was suddenly cut short.

The Doctor closed his eyes. If Peri was dead, he could never forgive himself. He had dragged her to this planet to satisfy his own curiosity. She hadn’t wanted to come. She didn’t even know Arthur, and he had scolded her for being unsympathetic towards his plight.

It was the Doctor’s own selfishness that had brought them into this. The last thing he wanted was to cause the death of another companion. No, Peri had to be alive. He had to find her. If only he could find the way to the DJ’s rooms.

The Doctor rounded a corner - where two Daleks stood waiting for him.

‘Ah, there you are. They went that-a-way,’ he said, pointing back the way he had just come.

One Dalek glided forward, its gun-arm ready. ‘You-will-come-with-us!’

The Doctor slowly raised his hands...

60

8

Judgement of the Daleks

With a blast from its landing rockets, the sleek black space ship descended onto the landing bay. From the observation lounge window Takis watched as the ship finally came to rest. The vessel did not feature the Presidential markings so he knew it was the unscheduled craft he was expecting.

‘Perfect timing,’ he smiled.

The two Daleks escorted the Doctor straight to Davros’s chamber. He took in the scene that greeted him as he entered: the Grand Knight of Oberon seated in a chair, exposed circuitry sparking from the remains of his left leg. The body of a woman lay crumpled near him. The smaller man who had been with the Knight was slumped in a corner (either dead or unconscious) and several guards stood at attention, their weapons drawn. In the centre of the room was a shattered glass dome inside which he could see the remains of something. And, as he had suspected, Davros.

‘I see that you have been busy,’ the Doctor observed.

Davros put Kara’s bomb on the table next to Orcini, and turned to face the Time Lord.

‘Whereas you have been stupid, Doctor.’

‘The prerogative of a Time Lord,’ sniffed the Doctor. ‘What have you done with Peri?’

‘She is safe - for the time being.’

The Doctor breathed a heavy sigh of relief. He walked over to Davros. ‘I must say, I am surprised to see you. The last time we met your ship blew up and, I thought, with you in it.’

‘Not when there is a life-pod to be had,’ explained Davros.

‘And a lift by transporter to this planet?’ suggested the Time Lord.

Davros laughed. ‘There I was fortunate.’

‘Oh, I liked the statue by the way,’ the Doctor admitted. ‘A very good likeness. Though you shouldn’t have bothered.’

‘As with the news of Stengos’s death, it was all part of my scheme to lure you here.’

Davros went on to explain the rest of his complex trap and how various clues, such as the statue in the Garden of Fond Memories, had all been presented to arouse the Doctor’s curiosity. Davros admitted that the final clue would have been Stengos himself - his horrific remains encased in a Dalek shell being an indication of what would ultimately happen to the Doctor. However, as Davros explained, thanks to the interference of two intruders, that part of the trap had unfortunately been destroyed prematurely.

‘All very clever,’ the Doctor breathed in admiration. It certainly was an intricate trap -

and all for me! he mused.

He went over and knelt beside Kara's body. 'Apart from a little grave-robbing, what else have you been up to?' He felt for a pulse, but there was nothing.

'You cannot steal that which has already been abandoned,' replied Davros. 'Nobody is 61

interested in the people here.'

The Doctor stood up. 'That's not what I've heard.'

'As your grave-robbing friends have been exterminated, you will not hear that complaint again!'

Grave-robbing friends? The Doctor shut his eyes. Natasha and Grigory? 'Do you never anything but kill?'

'There you are mistaken, Doctor. I am known as the Great Healer. A somewhat flippant title at that. But not without foundation.'

The Doctor noticed that Orcini was trying to attract his attention. He saw the lethal blade jutting from the knight's sleeve. The Doctor realised that it was Orcini who had killed the woman. The knight quickly pointed to the bomb on the table beside him. The Doctor nodded in understanding.

'I have conquered the diseases,' continued Davros, the Great Healer, 'that have brought their victims here. In every way I have complied with the wishes of those who came in anticipation of one day being returned to life.'

The Doctor was beginning to understand what the mutant had been trying to tell him.

'But never in their worst nightmares did any of them expect to come back -' he looked at the shrivelled head in the shattered dome '- as Daleks.'

Davros cackled. 'All the resting ones that I have used are people of status, ambition.

They will understand. Especially as I have given them the opportunity to become masters of the Universe!'

'And with you as their Emperor?'

Davros nodded.

'But what of the lesser intellects?' asked the Doctor. 'Or will they be left to rot?'

'Oh, you should know me better than that, Doctor. I never waste a valuable commodity.

The humanoid form makes an excellent concentrated protein!'

Everyone in the room - including Davros's human guards - were visibly shocked by this revelation. All eyes were on the Great Healer. Orcini took his chance to snatch up the bomb and hide it beneath the table.

'This part of the galaxy,' Davros continued, 'is developing quickly. Famine was one of its major problems.'

'You've turned them into food?' the Doctor frowned.

Davros chuckled. 'A scheme that has earned me great acclaim.'

'But did you bother to tell anyone that they might be eating their own relatives?'

'Certainly not!' exploded Davros. His voice calmed again. 'That would have created, what I believe is termed, "consumer resistance". They were grateful for the food - it allowed them to go on living.'

'So you could emerge with your Daleks and take over their planets.'

'Precisely...'

Takis pulled himself to attention (and nudged Lilt to do the same) as the airlock door slid open. They waited expectantly for the new arrivals to emerge.

Although he had seen the Great Healer's white Daleks many times before, Takis felt a chill run down his spine when the black Daleks glided onto the concourse.

He stepped forward. 'Welcome. I am Takis.'

A black Dalek with silver studs around its middle - clearly the leader - glided forward.

'You-sent-for-us?'

'That's right.'

'Where-is-Davros?'

'I-I-I'll take you to him. But first, can we discuss our deal?'

'You-will-obey-my-will! You-will-take-us-to-Davros. Now!'

Takis looked at Lilt and gulped. 'Of course.'

Two guards picked up Kara's body. They had been instructed to take it to her own factory, and throw it into the processing machines. Her desire to feed the whole galaxy was now taking on a whole new meaning.

A Dalek glided into the chamber. The Doctor smiled when he saw that Peri was with it.

She rushed to him, and gave him a hug. 'Are you alright?' she asked.

'Yes. And you?'

She nodded. The Doctor could see that she had been crying.

'I'm sorry about the DJ,' he said. The death count was getting too high.

Davros glided over to them. 'Now, Doctor. Prepare to witness the greatest rebirth ever.'

He pressed a button on the chair's control panel.

'You may be disappointed at the response,' the Doctor said, hoping that Natasha and Grigory had succeeded in destroying the incubation room before they were murdered.

(Unseen behind them, Bostock was slowly recovering. He pulled himself towards the archway. Reaching the first step, he stopped and waited.)

'Even if your friends had succeeded, they will have done very little damage,' stated Davros. 'The room they were attempting to destroy was one used for experimentation only. My main taskforce of Daleks is well hidden.'

The Doctor noticed that Davros had subconsciously gestured towards the far wall as he spoke.

Bostock seized this opportunity and raised his weapon. Taking careful aim, he fired.

Davros screamed as his hand was severed at the wrist. A green pus-like fluid squirted out. The hand itself fell twitching to the floor.

Orcini lashed out with his one remaining foot and kicked the edge of Davros's chair.

The chair shot across the room and thudded against a nearby console.

The nearest Dalek fired. The beam hit Bostock full in the chest. His lifeless body dropped.

The Doctor rushed over to the little man, but there was nothing he could do. Another death.

'Doctor. Look out!' warned Peri.

Two guards descended upon the Time Lord and violently pulled him away from Bostock's body. He struggled and delivered them each a blow to the stomach with his elbow. The two men staggered back under the blows, and released their hold.

'Stay-where-you-are!' grated a Dalek.

The Doctor raised his hands in surrender and backed away. As he did so, he kicked Bostock's fallen gun across the floor towards Orcini. The Grand Master scooped it up and hid it under the table next to Kara's bomb.

The service elevator door opened. As Takis stepped aside to allow the Daleks to emerge, the sound of gun-shots echoed down the dark tunnel. He frowned at Lilt, but his companion simply shrugged.

The Dalek behind him gave Takis a savage push. Puzzled about what was happening up ahead, Takis lead the black Daleks into the gloom...

Davros's body was shaking as a guard bound his wrist with a bandage.

'Prepare the first countermeasure,' Davros instructed him.

63

The guard tied the final knot, saluted, and left.

Davros turned to face the Doctor. 'Such a foolish waste of energy, Doctor.'

'No 'arm in trying,' joked the Time Lord.

Davros hissed at him. 'When you become a Dalek, you will suffer for every indignity that you ever caused me.'

Takis brought his party to a stop. The entrance to Davros's domain was only a few yards away. There were two white Dalek sentries at the threshold.

One of the black Daleks moved into the corridor.

'Exterminate!' cried a white Dalek, on seeing the advancing enemy. It had been programmed to recognise all non-white Daleks as hostile.

Takis and Lilt dove for cover as energy beams flashed between the two Dalek factions.

The battle was soon over. Both white Daleks were destroyed, and only one black Dalek was damaged. The remaining black Daleks continued down the passage.

The sounds of the battle came echoing into Davros's chamber.

'What is happening?' screamed Davros. 'Activate my Daleks!' he ordered.

A guard moved to a nearby console. As he passed him, Orcini whipped out Bostock's gun and blasted the man down.

Davros spun to face the knight and, like the mechanical head in the dome before, a bolt of energy flashed from his electronic eye, and smashed the weapon from Orcini's hand.

At that moment, the black Daleks swarmed into the chamber with Takis and Lilt close behind.

The black Dalek leader positioned itself in front of Davros. The Doctor could clearly see that Davros was shocked to see them.

'How did you find me?' croaked the evil scientist. Ever since he came to Necros, Davros feared being discovered by these Daleks, the ones who survived the Movellan war and retreated back home to Skaro. Davros considered these Daleks to be renegades because they rejected his will, and answered only to the Dalek Supreme - a title Davros wanted for himself.

Takis stepped forward. 'I sent for them.'

The black Dalek leader spoke. 'You-are-to-be-taken-back-to-Skaro-to-stand-trial-for-crimes-against-the-Daleks!'

'This used to be a good place before you came here,' explained Takis. 'I enjoyed working here. Once you have gone, it will be a good place once again.'

The Doctor shook his head. 'I shouldn't be too certain of that. You'd be lucky to be alive at the end of this.'

Takis frowned. 'But they're going to destroy Davros's Daleks. That was our deal.'

The black Dalek turned to Takis. 'They-will-not-be-destroyed. They-will-be-reconditioned-to-obey-the-will-of-the-Supreme-Dalek!' It turned back to Davros. 'You-will-come-with-us.'

Davros faced the grinning Doctor. 'No! Take him. He is the sworn enemy of the Daleks! He is the Doctor!'

The Doctor stepped back. 'Doctor? Who, me? No, no, no.'

The black Dalek leader studied the face of the man whom Davros called the Doctor. It searched its memory files for confirmation, but the stocky, curly-haired man did not register. 'His-image-does-not-compute-with-the-known-appearances-of-the-Doctor.'

‘He’s regenerated, you fool!’

But the Doctor just gave Davros a sickly smile. He knew that he was safe for now. He 64

could keep the pretence up for a while, but only until the Daleks had proof of his identity.

But the black Dalek didn’t want to take the risk. ‘He-will-be-held-prisoner-until-we-can-verify-if-you-are-correct! Now-move-or-you-will-be-exterminated-here!’

Davros looked up at the smug face of the Doctor. The Doctor had won this time, but their paths were sure to cross again. ‘You have not heard the last of me,’ promised Davros.

‘I shall return.’

‘And I shall be waiting for you.’ The Doctor reached out to shake Davros’s hand. Davros growled, then glided from the chamber followed by the black Daleks. One remained in position by the door.

Orcini looked at Takis. ‘You trusted them?’

Takis shrugged. ‘I thought it would do some good.’

The Doctor smiled. ‘It might yet. We must act fast before Davros’s Daleks are reactivated.’

Orcini nodded at their lone guard. ‘But first we have to get rid of that.’

Although he loathed guns, the Doctor picked up Bostock’s weapon from the floor.

‘Will that be effective?’ asked Peri.

Orcini nodded. ‘If we take out its eyepiece.’

‘What we need is a grenade,’ observed the Doctor.

Orcini pulled himself from the chair, and hopped over to Bostock’s body. ‘I’ll look in his pockets.’

The Doctor gestured everyone else closer. They huddled together like a sports team receiving a pep-talk from their coach. ‘Now, listen to me...’ he said, and he outlined his plan...

Davros could not accept that the Daleks had found him again. He had been able to work in secret all these years developing his new breed of Daleks, ones that would be more powerful than ever before. Daleks with which he would seize control of

the human colonies, and ultimately the galaxy. He had even given them a name: the Imperials. But now, with the intervention of Takis, his plans for conquest had been dashed.

The black Daleks escorted him to the service lift. ‘I created you!’ bellowed Davros. ‘I am your master.’

‘We-serve-only-the-Supreme-Dalek,’ came the reply.

‘That upstart! I could make you all Supreme. I have the power. You must obey me!’

But the Daleks ignored him.

They arrived at the elevator doors, and soon they were being carried towards the rocket pad...

Orcini had found a packet of plastic explosives on Bostock’s body. With this, the Doctor’s plan would have a chance of working. Everyone had their moves memorised and they moved into position. The Doctor stressed the importance of everyone keeping calm. They couldn’t afford to have anything to go wrong. They wouldn’t get another chance.

Takis took his position by the door. The others hid behind the consoles.

‘Hey, you out there,’ he called.

The Dalek moved closer. ‘You-will-remain-in-the-laboratory!’

‘We have a message for you from your master.’ He pointed at the console hiding the others.

Logical to the end, the Dalek glided into the room. It had been instructed to guard the prisoners and await for confirmation from the leader that the man in the long-coat was indeed the enemy of the Daleks known as the Doctor. It had orders to kill him if the ident 65

proved positive.

The Doctor leapt from hiding and fired Bostock’s gun at the Dalek’s eye-stalk. The shaft shattered.

‘My-vision-is-impaired! I-cannot-see! Emergency! I-cannot-see! Emergency!’ it screeched.

It was Peri’s turn to move next. Ducking from the Dalek’s rays as they flew across the room, she dashed up to the Dalek, attached the plastic explosive charge to the Dalek’s neck section and pressed the timer. A bolt flew over her head as she ran for cover.

The timer clicked to zero - and with an almighty explosion, the Dalek disintegrated.

The Doctor rushed over to the door to check that no other Daleks were outside. Seeing that the way was clear, he rushed back into the lab and went over to study the scorched features of the head inside the smashed dome.

‘What now?’ asked Peri.

The Doctor rubbed his chin. ‘There’s something I want to have a look at.’

He crossed over to the far wall of the chamber. Davros had gestured to this section earlier. The Doctor had an idea he knew what was beyond the wall. He felt around the edge of the statue that rested in an alcove. When he twisted the figurine the wall slid across revealing a hidden room.

‘Stay here,’ he ordered, and he entered the dark interior.

Inside, he found a small control room. At the centre, facing a wall covered in monitor screens, was a complex panel. The Doctor guessed that Davros’s chair fitted into it, and it was from there that he had controlled his puppet in the dome outside.

The Doctor flicked a switch at random on the console and a screen lit up. A bird’s eye view of the outer room appeared. No doubt every corridor and chamber in Tranquil Repose could be accessed from here, he surmised.

A faint glow caught his eye. It was coming from a window set into the back wall of the secret lab. He crossed to it and peered through the glass. He stared in astonishment at the sight that greeted him. Beyond was an enormous cavern lined with row upon row of catwalks. On the catwalks were hundreds of white Daleks, all in frozen suspension. It reminded the Doctor of something similar he had seen on the planet Spiridon. Davros’s army was ready, and awaiting the final signal to emerge.

Peri noticed the Doctor’s concerned expression as he emerged from the recess. ‘We need a bomb. Davros’s Daleks are in there, in hibernation.’

‘No. You can’t destroy this place!’ cried Takis.

Lilt agreed. ‘He’s right.’

‘Tranquil Repose has ceased to have any practical function,’ explained the Time Lord.

‘Its cryogenic chambers are empty. Davros has used the contents and turned them into Daleks - or synthetic protein.’

Takis looked at Lilt in astonishment. He was aware that Davros experimented on some of the bodies in storage, but he had no idea they were also being turned into food.

‘He’s telling the truth,’ said Orcini. ‘After what Davros has done, you’ll never restore the reputation of this place.’

But Lilt was still not convinced. ‘Don’t trust him.’

‘You must,’ urged the Doctor. ‘I can show you a new life.’

Takis frowned. ‘How?’

The Doctor explained that since Davros had created the demand for synthetic protein, to suddenly cease fulfilling that demand would mean the deaths of those planets that needed it. He indicated the purple flower in Takis’s lapel.

‘The weed plant?’ Takis didn’t understand.

‘It grows almost anywhere,’ explained the Doctor, smiling. ‘When refined, it produces protein!’

Takis looked at the innocent little flower in his button-hole. He had decorated many bodies with this flower, and now he was being told that he could eat the plant. He didn’t fancy the prospect, but when survival came first, he would try anything.

‘That’s a great idea!’ agreed Peri, remembering the Doctor’s earlier lecture.

Orcini coughed. They turned to see him standing on his good leg, holding Kara’s box of tricks. ‘You must leave here. I have a bomb - and I would very much like to use it,’ he announced. ‘Not only will it destroy Davros’s Daleks, it might just catch him as well.’

‘Orcini...’ started the Doctor.

‘There’s no timing mechanism, Doctor. Once I press this button-’

‘I could rig one!’

‘There is no time. I want Davros dead.’

‘But you see...’ the Time Lord pleaded.

The knight wasn’t going to be persuaded. ‘I won’t hesitate to use this now. Go, Doctor.

Go now!’

‘Why are you throwing your life away?’ cried Peri.

Orcini smiled at her. ‘I have always wanted an honourable kill, and Davros will be it.’

His smile faded. ‘Go now. The catacombs are deep. You must find a safe place.’

The Doctor turned to Peri and the others. ‘Go. I’ll join you later.’

Peri hesitated, but trusted that the Doctor knew what he was doing. She followed the others out.

Orcini hopped over to and sat beside Bostock's body. He cradled his faithful squire's head in his lap.

'Is there anything I can do?' asked the Doctor.

Orcini removed the medal from his jacket and handed it to the Time Lord. 'Return this to my Order. Tell them how we died.'

'Of course.'

'No more words,' said the Grand Master of the Order of Oberon. 'Go!'

The Doctor took one final look at the selfless knight, and left the laboratory.

Peri, Takis and Lilt ran into the main Hall. Peri stopped at the doorway leading to the freezing units to see if the Doctor was following.

Takis shouted at the Attendants who were moving around, oblivious of what was happening. 'I want everyone to clear this room immediately!'

The Attendants fled in panic.

'Do you think we're safe enough?' asked Peri.

But Takis's attention was on the communication console scanner. On it, he could see the Dalek saucer preparing to lift off.

'It's too late,' she cried. 'They got away!'

'Let's get out of here!' screamed Lilt.

'No. We must wait for the Doctor!'

Takis grabbed her shoulders and started to guide her towards the service lifts to the sub-levels, but she pulled herself free and ran back to the door leading to the catacombs.

Takis sighed heavily, and went after her...

So it is true, thought Orcini. When you are about to die, your life does flash before your eyes. He smiled as he saw himself riding into battle on his steed, with Bostock at his side.

Their battles had been many and victorious. An honourable death was all they asked for; 67

and that was what they would have.

Orcini smiled down at the still face of his companion. For you, Bostock...

...and he pressed the final button...

The Dalek ship rose from the landing port. It fired its orbit-rockets and shot off into the sky. Seconds later, the ground beneath it exploded into a huge fireball. The landing port was blown apart.

In the catacombs far below, Davros's frozen Dalek army was crushed beneath tons of earth.

The blast of the explosion knocked the Doctor against the wall of the passage he was in.

He staggered to his feet and continued down the corridor. He could hear Peri calling out to him, and he headed for the sound.

'Doctor!' called Peri. She peered down the dark tunnel. She could see something moving...

'He's had it,' said Takis, as he came to her side. He grabbed her arm. 'Come on, let's get to the lower sections.'

The roof above them collapsed, and Takis pulled Peri away.

At the end of the tunnel a figure appeared, coughing.

'Wait!' she cried, and the Doctor emerged from the dust-filled passage.

'Are you okay?' she asked, relieved.

The Doctor nodded. 'Did Davros get away?'

'Yes,' she said sadly. 'Do you think they'll execute him?'

The Doctor shook his head. He really didn't know. Davros said that their paths would cross again, and the Doctor knew that that was probably true. He doubted that the Daleks would kill their creator. They would find some use for him. Probably make him their Emperor, he mused.

'I'd hate to think that Orcini died for nothing,' continued Peri.

'He didn't. He achieved a kill greater than he thought possible. He destroyed Davros's new direction of Daleks.'

Takis was worried about the damage done to the complex. Further sections of ceiling crashed to the ground around them. ‘Come on you two. This is no time to chat. Hurry!

This way!’

‘What are we going to do now?’ Peri asked the Doctor.

‘Find the TARDIS, then make sure that Takis and Lilt get this place sorted out.’

He took her arm and they followed Takis into the service lift. Just as the doors closed, the ceiling collapsed onto the exact spot where they had been standing...

The once peaceful Tranquil Repose was now nothing more than a shattered ruin. One of the pyramids had collapsed in on itself, and the Garden of Fond Memories was now just a memory.

The surviving Attendants emerged from their shelter. Bodies of unfortunate Attendants and guards lay crushed beneath support beams, and President Vargos’s wife was buried under a pile of broken rubble.

That morning, Jobel had remarked that the day would go down in history. He had been correct, but at what price? Takis wondered as he surveyed the damage in the main Hall.

Their once happy workplace was destroyed. What were they going to do now?

Then Lilt reminded him: ‘What’s all this about us becoming farmers?’

‘Don’t you start!’ snapped Takis.

‘Well it’s true,’ said Lilt. ‘All you know about is flowers.’

Takis smiled. ‘Mind you, that plot used for Perpetual Instatement would make excellent growing ground.’

The Doctor entered the Hall, and caught Takis’s remark. ‘This place is called Tranquil Repose,’ he said. ‘I think we should leave the dead in peace, don’t you?’

Takis shrugged, and went off to help with the injured.

Peri sighed. It had been a very long day. ‘When we finish here can we take a real holiday?’

The Doctor agreed. The day’s events had indeed been tiring. ‘I know a place,’ he said,

‘that is truly tranquil... peaceful... restful. A panacea for the cares of mind.’

He hadn’t been to Florana for ages, he mused. The last time he’d tried to get there, he ended up on the planet Exxilon - fighting Daleks!

Peri disliked the Doctor’s habit of trying to talk her into going off to some remote planet looking for peace and quiet. Places like the Eye Of Orion and Argolis all sounded so boring, she thought.

‘Can’t we go somewhere fun?’ she asked.

‘Fun?’ he winced. ‘Oh well, I suppose anywhere will be peaceful after Necros.’

But where could they go? The Universe had an infinite number of things to offer them.

Excitement, mystery and... fun. What they really needed was a place with no crowds, no Daleks and no danger. A place that was safe...

The Doctor smiled. He had the perfect idea.

‘I know,’ he said finally. ‘I’ll take you to Blackpool!’

Tranquil Repose on the planet Necros is a mortuary with a difference - for it is here that the galaxy's rich and famous cheat death by being placed in suspended animation. But the bodies are going missing...

The Doctor and Peri arrive on Necros to pay their last respects to the Doctor's old friend Arthur Stengos, but the Time Lord suspects that something is not quite right. His doubts are shared by Stengos' daughter, Natasha, who soon discovers the awful truth behind her father's fate.

As the Doctor investigates, he not only discovers that the head of Tranquil Repose is none other than his old enemy Davros - who has genetically engineered a new breed of Dalek - but also uncovers a far more shocking and sinister revelation...

This is an unofficial and unauthorised fan publication.

No profits have been derived from this book. Not for resale.

TSV Books